John Hancock

JOHN HANCOCK
THE PICTURESQUE PATRIOT

BY LORENZO SEARS, L.H.D.

THE HISTORY OF ORATORY FROM THE AGE OF PERICLES TO THE PRESENT TIME

THE OCCASIONAL ADDRESS: ITS COMPOSITION AND LITERATURE. A STUDY IN DEMONSTRATIVE ORATORY

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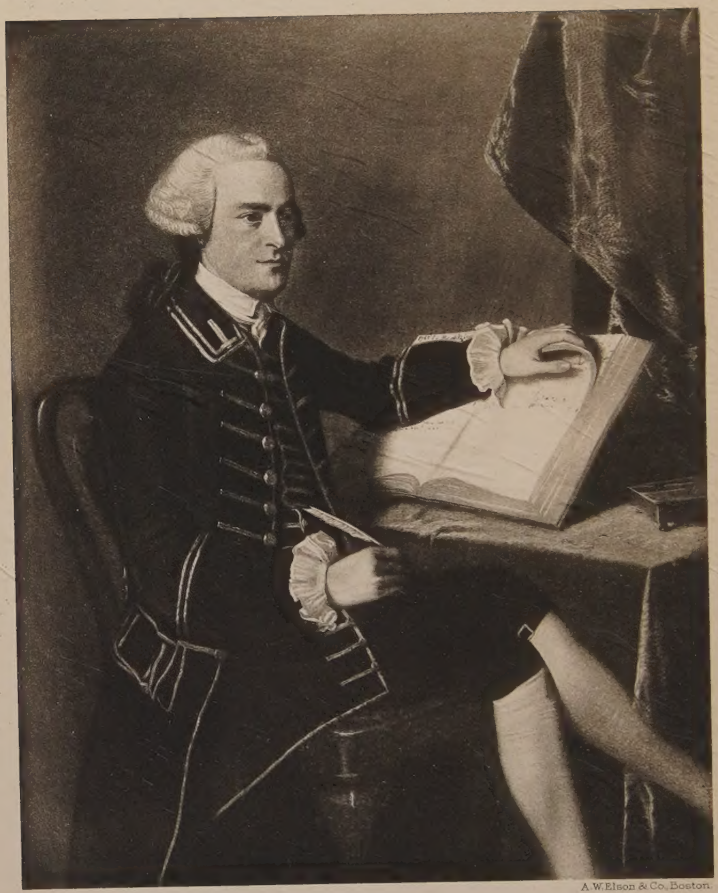
SEVEN NATURAL LAWS OF LITERARY COMPOSITION

MAKERS OF AMERICAN LITERATURE

WENDELL PHILLIPS, ORATOR AND AGITATOR

JOHN HANCOCK, THE PICTURESQUE PATRIOT



A. W. Elson & Co., Boston.

JOHN HANCOCK

From the Painting by John Singleton Copley

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

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BY

LORENZO SEARS

AUTHOR OF "THE HISTORY OF ORATORY," "AMERICAN LITERATURE," "WENDELL PHILLIPS," ETC.

"Greatly favored and blessed of Providence will you be if you should in your lifetime be known for what you are." — WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

BOSTON
LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY
1913

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Published, October, 1912.

Printers
S. J. Parkhill & Co., Boston, U. S. A.

TO

A. H. S.

PREFACE

JOHN HANCOCK'S famous signature has made him more widely known than most other and later signers of the Declaration of Independence. Yet less is commonly known about him than concerning other prominent patriots of the Revolution. He was active and conspicuous in his time; but he left few materials for a biography, and these for the most part in remote hiding places. John Adams once remarked, "The Life of John Hancock will not ever be written." Twenty years later, when political disagreements were overlooked, Adams wrote, "If I had the forces I should be glad to write a volume of Mr. Hancock's life, character, and generous nature."

One hundred and three years had passed after the death of its first Governor, in 1793, when the Commonwealth of Massachusetts dedicated a monument to his memory in the old Granary Burying Ground near Boston Common. On this occasion Governor Wolcott remarked with regret upon the neglect which had allowed the grave of a man who played so large a part in the Revolutionary period to remain unmarked by any enduring monument. In editing letters from Hancock's Letter-Book, extending over a period of twenty years of commercial activity, Abram English Brown assigned

among reasons why Hancock's biography had never been written: "He left no descendants. His numerous relatives received and enjoyed his great wealth; but neither pride nor gratitude incited them to the work of writing the life of their benefactor. His unremitting toils and sacrifices for the public good may have been so far overshadowed by his unaccountable management of the treasury of Harvard College as to deter any man of that institution from undertaking the work. It is to be hoped that some pen is now at work upon an adequate history of John Hancock which the public will welcome before many years."

Among the Chamberlain manuscripts in the Boston Public Library is a newspaper clipping, dated February 11, 1884, which states that materials for a biography were once collected, but later purchased for a thousand dollars and suppressed; a statement which, if true, adds interest to the particulars of a career that can now be well understood from authentic sources.

Prominent as Hancock was in his day and generation, his services to his own State and to the country were of a nature to be overshadowed by more noticeable exploits and achievements, military and civil; and the accounts of his doings are often incidental and fragmentary in the records of the period.

Hancock has been called picturesque not as qualifying his patriotism, but as recognizing a feature which has its own interest in a movement that

generally lacked this element. Yet he was more than a bit of color in a sombre landscape. He was the earliest considerable sufferer from commercial oppression; the first aristocrat of Boston to join a party which had little property to lose; one of the two whom royal displeasure excluded from pardon; often chairman of liberty meetings; a member of the Great and General Court; deputy to the Provincial Congresses and presiding officer; also deputy to the Continental Congress and for two and a half years its President; the first Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and ten times re-elected. His large contributions to the Revolutionary cause; his skilful guidance of discordant statesmen into agreement in a critical time; his efficient service in retaining the French good-will when its threatened loss would have entailed eventual defeat at Yorktown; his influence in securing the ratification of the Constitution by Massachusetts, and in consequence by a majority of the States, — all these services and responsibilities together made him a man to be reckoned with in a troubled period. Also to be courted and flattered. If he was vain, he had contributors to his vanity; if he loved popularity, he paid a good price for it; if he was fond of display, he could afford it out of his own purse; if he neglected the affairs of a needy college in the pressure of national business, he also neglected his own, receiving no compensation as other presidents did. He was human but self-respecting; courtly and cour-

teous; an aristocrat with sympathies for common people; benevolent and hospitable; a man for his time without whom the results of what at first was an unpopular struggle might have been otherwise than they finally were. He at least deserves recognition in a day when deeds can be seen in their true relations, and the lives of their doers in proper perspective.

Repetition of the familiar story of the American Revolution has been avoided as far as possible, those phases only being noted with which Hancock was directly associated. More attention has been given to his surroundings, particularly in the years before he entered upon public life, in order to show what share his environment may have had in shaping his future career.

Grateful acknowledgments are due to the librarians of the Public Library, the John Hay Library, and the Historical Society in Providence for special privileges; for the same in the Public Library of Boston, in the New England Historic and Genealogical Society's Library; among the manuscript Archives of Harvard University, the Hancock manuscripts in the Archives of Massachusetts at the State House, and the valuable collection of letters in the possession of William P. Greenough, Esq., of Boston. To his classmate, S. Arthur Bent, Esq., of Boston, the author is indebted for many helpful courtesies, and to several authors, correspondents, and friends for various favors.

PROVIDENCE, April, 1912.

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JOHN HANCOCK

CHAPTER I

AN INSURGENT TOWN

Old Braintree on Massachusetts Bay, the birthplace of John Hancock, always had distinctions of its own in the direction of independence. Situated on the trail from Plymouth towards Boston, Wessagusset became a retreat for two early adventurers who were as unlike the settlers at Patuxet and Shawmut as these were different from the Cavaliers of England. The freedom which Pilgrim and Puritan came here to enjoy had its limitations, as all intruders discovered; but the interlopers who arrived between them, in place and time, stretched the principle of liberty to absurd license and to their own consequent discomfiture. Yet their presence in the neighborhood and their respective fortunes have a prophetic interest when later advocates of a more reasonable freedom are recalled, who thus gave the old town a nobler eminence. In an age of extremists two aliens in particular illustrated their own ideas of liberty in ways that had something of romance and picturesqueness in the midst of a grim generation.

Thomas Morton of Clifford's Inn, Gent., as he styled himself, was the first of these adventurers to settle in Wessagusset, where he became known as Morton of Merry Mount. The story of his doings there cannot be told so often as to lose its raciness amidst the dreary chronicles of the Bay. He brought with him two qualifications which his neighbors did not require of incomers. Such legal attainments as he possessed were not desired in a dispute that was brewing about land ownership; and the religious inclination he manifested was not agreeable, since it was according to the rites of that Established Church which the early settlers had abandoned. This might have been endured if he had kept good order on "Mount Dagon" and in adjacent territory. Instead, he surrounded himself with a gang of bond-servants left behind by Captain Wollaston when he took the rest of the lot to Virginia to serve out their indentures — a vagabond crew not unlike the shipload of emigrant adventurers which came to the Old Dominion with John Smith a dozen years before. With this motley crowd Morton, kingsman and courtier, set up a miniature commonwealth at Mount Wollaston in the autumn of 1626, not anticipating the Cromwellian pattern, except that he was to be a Lord Protector. Aside from this, there was not much provision for anything beyond an Arcadian state of jollity. It was worse than this when he invited Indians and their squaws into his roistering camp,

and at length began to trade guns and ammunition with them for food and furs.[1] Then it was time for Endicott and Standish to hew down the antler-crowned May-pole, burn the common house, and leave Morton on a secluded island to the hospitality of savages, which he preferred to theirs; and finally to send him back to England as a warning to all who might mistake this land of modified liberty for a resort of license. Morton had his revenge in writing a spicy account of his sojourn in the wilderness under the title of "The New English Canaan," in which he extolled the country more than its colonists. His description of its pleasant hillocks, meandering streams, and abundance of game might have induced immigration if his portrayal of the new inhabitants of the land had not been more repelling than his account of the aborigines. Yet it has appealed sufficiently to sundry descendants of the early fathers to become the basis of stories by Hawthorne and Motley, who have made the Merry Mount camp the one joyous feature in the first decade of colonial life in Massachusetts Bay.[2]

[1] Young's "Chronicles of Massachusets," p. 156; Bradford's "History of Plymouth Plantation," p. 284.

[2] The "New English Canaan" is to Bradford's "History" and Winslow's "Journal" what the life at Merry Mount was to that at Plymouth. Written before 1635, it was printed at Amsterdam in 1637. Force reprinted it in the second volume of his "American Tracts," Washington, 1838. A revised, corrected, and annotated edition was edited by Charles Francis Adams, Jr., and published by the Prince Society, in Boston in 1883. It is already a rare book, only 250 copies having been printed.

One reason, perhaps the chief one, for Morton's presence here has sometimes been overlooked. If it is true that he was one of Sir Ferdinando Gorges' son John's emissaries or agents, the misrule and riot of his stay were not so much the object of his adventure as incidents of a residence which otherwise might have been as prosy as in the other settlements. The Gorges' claim to a tract of New England some three hundred miles square, lying north of the Charles River, was disputed after the Massachusetts Company was granted by the crown the whole territory as far as the Merrimac, including the Gorges Concession. This, it was contended, had been secured to the Gorges by the settlement of Blackstone, Jeffreys, and others; whereupon Endicott made haste to send forty or fifty squatters there. Then it became desirable to have the Gorges' interest looked after by some one on the ground or near by, and Morton may have been sent for this purpose.[1]

There was another and later instance of inde-

"The cumbrous sarcasm and the pedantic scurrility of the New English Canaan." — Doyle's "English Colonies in America," II, 274.

[1] The Gorges expedition made the first permanent settlement on the shores of Boston Harbor, and from the post at Wessagusset came the men who first settled within the present limits of Boston. Lodge's "Boston" in "Historic Towns," p. 6. For the extent of the Gorges' enterprises on the coast, see "Maine Hist. Soc. Coll.," I, 56. Also Osgood's "American Colonies in the XVII Century," III, chapter 3. The text of the Grant may be found in MacDonald's "Select Charters," p. 249.

pendent life, less noisy and obtrusive, which, however, did not escape the attention of the ruling spirits at Shawmut and Naumkeag. Not far from Mount Wollaston, to which Morton had found his way back at this date, appeared about the first of May, 1630, Sir Christopher Gardiner, Knight, pretending that he was weary of wandering in the Old World and that he was seeking a retreat in the wilderness. His adventures suggest those of the martial John Smith, that soldier of fortune in strange lands. He had picked up a university degree somewhere, and had exchanged what Protestantism he possessed for the Roman faith. Moreover he brought with him, besides a servant or two, one Mary Grove, whom he called his cousin, about whose degree of consanguinity the neighboring elders were in doubt, but concerning whose relations with Sir Christopher they were more positive in their opinions. His case was not so easy to manage as Morton's had been. The colonists' English reverence for titled persons and the absence of positive proof to confirm their strong suspicions held direct interference in check for a while. As he did not give magistrates the cause for complaint that Morton did in consorting with savages, the most they undertook at first was to make inquiry about two women in England who were each disputing the right of the other to call Sir Christopher husband. This was accordingly entered upon the records: "It is ordered that Sir

Christopher Gardiner and Mr. Wright shall be sent as prisoners into England by the ship Lyon, now returning thither."[1] When they came for the knight he took to the woods, leaving Mary Grove to be carried to Boston, where she was ordered to be sent to the two wives in England "to search her further." Meantime, while she was detained in Boston, Sir Christopher being in hiding, her doubtful relation toward him was disposed of by her marriage to one Thomas Purchase, who came out of the Maine woods to buy axes, ammunition, and incidentally to find a wife. Gardiner may have heard of her good fortune, since he appeared in time to accompany the couple to the Androscoggin country, whence, after a year's stay in their home, he returned to England to assist in urging the Gorges' claim to the New England tract, which was finally disallowed. He then disappeared from view and was heard of no more.

These two romantic episodes in the early history of Braintree were not, to be sure, formal declarations of independence of the ruling order, but they were diametrically opposed to its temporal interests, its social régime, and its spiritual tone. The first were contested in the courts of the realm; the second was flouted by scandalous and disorderly living; the third was antagonized by the

[1] "With such trash, God be your direction," wrote John Clotworthy to John Winthrop. 5 "Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll.," VI, 209.

two forms of religion which the colonists came here to escape. All together, the contrast between the two renegades with their households at Wessagusset and the staid families at Plymouth, Salem, and Boston was vivid enough to give early notoriety to the town which afterward became famous as the birthplace of national independence, in so far as it was the native town of two of the most active early advocates and promoters of separation from the mother country.[1] It might be imagined that there was something in the very air of the place to foster notions of protest against unwelcome restraint, by whomsoever maintained, since control of diverse nature had been contested there by men of different minds. At all events it became as famous in the latter part of the eighteenth century as in the first part of the seventeenth by reason of two men who were born there, whose application of the principle of liberty differed radically from the lawlessness of Morton and Gardiner.

There was a third departure from the purpose of the Bay settlers which, while it did not violate their sense of morality and of what was safe, had nevertheless a divergence from their own religious polity, and was almost as offensive as the waywardness of Morton and Gardiner. As early as 1689 a little group of Church of England people lived in Braintree, and in

[1] In "Where American Independence Began," D. M. Wilson makes the claim of this title for the town.

one house at least prayers from the service book were daily read; probably by that Lieutenant Veazy who contributed one pound sterling toward building King's Chapel in Boston, where doubtless he and his friends occasionally worshipped, as it was only ten miles distant.[1] Eleven years later, the London Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts was formed, and soon after, an "annual encouragement of fifty pounds and a gratuity of twenty-five pounds for present occasion" was granted to "Mr. William Barclay, the minister of the Church of England at Braintree in New England," with a collection of twenty books to form the nucleus of a church library. On account of the relaxation of Puritan discipline, and the support given to Episcopacy by royal governors, it was impossible to make such short work with this alien element as would have suppressed it in previous years; but it was regarded with scarcely more favor than a similar intent in earlier days when a supervising clergyman was sent to Plymouth, who discreetly held his peace, or when Morton himself upheld the rites of the Established Church two generations before. Yet toleration was not in vogue, and the earliest Episcopal church in New England outside

[1] Ghostly reminiscences of King's Chapel from 1686, and in the Revolutionary period may be found in chapters seventy-seven and seventy-eight of "Dealings with the Dead, by a Sexton of the Old School," Boston, 1856.

of Boston and Newport was not to be countenanced by the standing order. Neither was it to be ignored, particularly when tithes were to be collected; from the payment of which Church of England folk were by no means exempted. Down to 1704 Colonel Edmund Quincy had hopes of suppressing churchmen by a town vote, toward which he had sixteen names pledged at one time. After a ten-years' struggle the resident minister could say:—

"The whole province has been very much disturbed on account of my coming to this place, in 1713, and accordingly have not failed to affront and abuse me—'atheist' and 'papist' is the best language I can get from them. The people are independents, and have a perfect odium to those of our communion. These few are taxed and rated most extravagantly to support the dissenting clergy."[1]

On the other hand, it appears that the Venerable Society had not been fortunate in the choice of their second missionary to Braintree. And the church warden had been fined for "plowing on the day of Thanksgiving," while the Puritan persuasion "cohorted their families from Christmas-keeping and charged them to forbear." Evidently the exceptional placing of an Episcopal church in a separatist settlement was an episode of sufficient

[1] The amount to be raised is indicated by the following: "2th Jan. 1670, disposed 15£ to Mr. Peter Bulkley of Concord: 20 s. a man for all the ministers that had bine helpfull to the chh." And on the 13 May, 1672,—"To try Mr. Moses ffiske for a house & yearly salary of 60 pounds & five acres of marsh grass from year to year."—"Records of the Town of Braintree," p. 11.

importance to be classed with the earlier provocations which had stirred the village. It was another instance of independence of the primitive order which was not to be overlooked, and to be repressed if not suppressed, by the town-meeting if possible, or by such methods of ostracism as villagers can devise and make effective.

But the spirit of independence came with the wind from off the ocean, inhaled by every inhabitant; and though Judge Sewall in his time was glad to note that "trade went on as usual in Boston on Christmas Day, 1727," he also observed that "Mr. Miller kept the day in his new (Episcopal) Church at Braintree, and the people flock thither"; as they do to-day in greater numbers, since the prejudice and opposition have vanished after two centuries of varying persistence and strength.[1]

A town which was remarked beyond its neighbors for radical doings in its pristine days might naturally be expected to distinguish itself further in the same direction in the progress of time and events. At least it would be regarded as a fitting birthplace of leaders in new movements and departures. The traditions of the place were those of protest if not of successful revolt; the environment of the inhabitants was the spirit of freedom. Reverence for custom and public sentiment had been lacking

[1] "We have a few rascally Jacobites and Roman Catholics in this town, but they do not dare show themselves." — John Adams, in "Works," IX. 335.

in notorious instances, and an established order had not always been accepted by universal consent. If the atmosphere of a neighborhood, its known history, and common talk are recognized molders of disposition and temper, such men as Adams, Hancock, and Quincy seem to be the inevitable product of Old Braintree, and the political changes they were forward in bringing about were the legitimate result of their environment.[1]

[1] The North Precinct of Braintree was named Quincy in 1792 for the John Quincy of Mount Wollaston, through the influence of Christopher Cranch. Otherwise, according to Charles Francis Adams, in his "History of Quincy," p. 272, the town might have been named for Hancock, as he was a native of the North Precinct, and more widely known, "and popular to a degree which no other public man has since equaled." A county afterward was to bear his name. See also D. M. Wilson's "Col. John Quincy, Master of Mount Wollaston," p. 25.

CHAPTER II

HOME AND SCHOOL

THE Reverend John Hancock, minister of the First Church in the North Precinct of Braintree, made the following entry in the parish register of births: "John, son of John Adams, October 26, 1735." About fifteen months later he made this one: "John Hancock, my son, January 16, 1737."

An eminent jurist and writer on New England origins has remarked that if one is looking for the aristocracy of the Puritan period, he must inquire for the ministers and deacons: an observation whose truth colonial history abundantly confirms. It has also been shown, contrary to the common supposition, that there are fewer scapegraces among the families of these worthies than elsewhere: another genealogical conclusion which the two boys who began life so near together exemplified in their respective careers.

Of the Hancock genealogy it may be said that a Nathaniel Hancock was in Cambridge as early as 1634. He died in 1652. An eldest child may have been born before he came to this country. A son,

Nathaniel, was born in 1638; his son John, "Bishop" John, pastor of the Lexington Church, was born in 1671; his son John, pastor of the Braintree Church, was born in 1702; and his son, John Hancock the patriot, was born on the 16th of January, 1737. A daughter, Mary, was born on the 8th of April, 1735; a son, Ebenezer, on the 5th of November, 1744.

Two children were born to John Hancock the 3d: Lydia Henchman, born in January, 1777, who died in the following summer, and John George Washington, born May 21, 1778, who died from an accident in 1787 while skating.

The Hancock coat of arms consists of an open hand, raised as if in protest, above which in the chief are three fighting-cocks. Perhaps it was with this blazonry in mind that John's father-in-law used to write of him as Mr. Handcock. Such devices of "canting arms," allusive to one's name or occupation, sometimes have been taken as indicating recent fabrication, not unknown in a new country; but trustworthy authorities in heraldry state that such descriptive display is proof of antiquity and is of highly honorable character. The crest is a chanticleer in bellicose attitude, made more terrible by the metamorphosis of postern plumes into the tail of a dragon. Appended to the whole runs the motto, — not without fitness in the life of a sumptuous liver, — *Nul Plaisir Sans Peine.*

It is not difficult to imagine what was the boyish life of the two playfellows. Doubtless they were more carefully watched and commented upon than their companions, since they belonged to households that were expected to be patterns to the rest of the community; and for this reason it is likely that they suffered some superfluous restraint at home which they might otherwise have escaped. The *noblesse oblige* of their day and station was largely negative. Thou shalt not do all that other boys do, for thou art the minister's son, or the deacon's; which was restrictive enough to cramp the spirit of freedom in any natural boy, unless it should be too strong to be bound by convention. If such was the tendency of the Hancock lad's training it did not last many years, for when he was seven his father died, leaving a widow and three children no larger inheritance than is usual with clergymen whose parishioners have not exposed them to the deceitfulness of riches. Had he lived longer he would doubtless have fitted the boy for college, as ministers of that time could, and would have expected the son to follow in his steps, as he himself had in his father's, the noted "Bishop Hancock," as he was called for his masterful efficiency as pastor of the Lexington church and as a presiding officer. Even in his father's lifetime the lad fell into other hands when, in company with John Adams, he was taught by Joseph Marsh, the son of the elder John Hancock's predecessor in the Braintree pas-

torate. Upon his father's death, an important change awaited the son.

An uncle, Thomas Hancock, was accounted the richest merchant in Boston and the most enterprising in New England at a time when colonial commerce made many opulent, notwithstanding demands from the home government across the sea. Besides, it did not then require millions to make one rich. On the other hand, personal ability was not supplemented by combinations of capital and venal legislatures. Success was won by single-handed effort in an open field for all comers, in which there was nothing worse than evasion of oppressive revenue laws by everybody who dared to defy them. Furthermore, Thomas Hancock had married a daughter of Henchman, a prosperous bookseller and stationer of Boston, and her inheritance eventually augmented the fortune of the childless aristocrat, making the prospect golden for an adopted heir. Doubtless the uncle had his reasons for choosing only one out of the three children at the Braintree parsonage as the object of special favor, although he did not neglect the other nephew and the niece. The widow was provided with a husband and home not long after her bereavement, as was apt to be the case with clergymen's "relicts" in colonial days.

The favored son John was transferred from a country village to the chief town of the province and the busiest seaport along the coast, where

the descendants of gentry who came over in the decade before Cromwell's rise had lived and thrived for a hundred years, now numbering about 17,000 inhabitants, including alien mixtures. The swift and slow ships that carried oil and timber, fish and furs to London brought back silks and velvets, wines and spices, costumes and equipages, with the fashions of court and hall to be followed by citizens whose simplicity was by no means republican, as their politics also were not at this time adverse to the crown. Moreover the boy was ushered into the best house in Boston. Great prosperity had followed Thomas Hancock after he left his future father-in-law, married the daughter Lydia, and set up for himself as bookbinder and bookseller at the Stationers' Arms on Ann Street in 1729. Within seven years he began to make contracts for a mansion to be built on the sunny side of Beacon Hill, a large part of which he had acquired for nothing.[1] Granite blocks, squared and hammered, came from Braintree, and brownstone trimmings from Hartford, at a cost of 300 pounds sterling "in goods." The best crown glass, 480 squares, 12 by 18 and 8 by 12, were ordered from London, with wall papers on which there should be "peacocks, macoys, squirrel, monkeys, fruit

[1] "The result is that Thomas Hancock thus obtained all Beacon Hill without paying one cent for it, and he and those coming after him retained possession by pasturing cows there." — Justin Winsor, "Memorial History of Boston," II, 520. On the value of the land then and now see *Ib.*, Introd., xlvi.

and flowers," which the merchant thinks "are handsomer and better than paintings done in oyle." Also, for the kitchen, "a Jack of three Guineas price, with a wheel-fly and Spitt-Chain to it," suggestive of generous living, as also are subsequent orders for Madeira wines "without regard to price provided the quality answers to it"; to be accompanied by "6 Quart Decanters and 6 pint do., 2 doz. handsome, new fash'd wine glasses, 6 pr. Beakers, 2 pr. pint Cans, and 1–2 do., 6 Beer glasses, 12 water glasses, and 2 doz. Jelly glasses." Well he might write a friend, "We live Pretty comfortable here on Beacon Hill," as he continued to for twenty-five years.

The minister's son must have had awesome thoughts as he climbed the grand steps and entered the panelled hall with its broad staircase adorned with carved and twisted balusters and a "Chiming Clock" surmounted with carved figures "Gilt with burnished Gold," the case "to be 10 foot long, the price not to exceed 50 Guineas," — so the order for it ran. Then there were portraits of dignitaries on the walls of the great drawing-room where still more notable men were soon to assemble, incidentally for a boy's education in things not taught at school.

To be transplanted from the country parsonage to a lordly mansion on Beacon Hill was an event whose importance a lad of seven years could not be expected to appreciate immediately, as he could

not foresee all its consequences. The loss of his childhood's home would not be made up to him at once by the grandeur of his uncle's house, but it was an exchange which had the fewest possible drawbacks. An envied position among his playmates was established at once, with predictions of an assured fortune in the future. The flattery which boys have their own way of conveying would not tend to diminish his native vanity. He would have exhibited an alarming precocity in goodness if he had not developed some boyish sense of New England caste even while living in his father's house, which would not be lessened in the stately domicile of his uncle, whose tastes and sympathies were of a kind to direct the nephew into the upper walks of life. For Thomas Hancock had a keen appreciation of social values and a high estimate of education and literature according to the somewhat narrow standards of his time, as shown by his gift of books to the value of five hundred pounds sterling to Harvard College, and by founding a professorship of Oriental Languages and of Hebrew in a day when this language was one of the useful and elegant accomplishments of the ministry, as it had been of queens in Shakespeare's day.

Whether there was anything more attractive to a boy than the Hebraic literature, which like Israelitish names had prevailed in the Puritan period, cannot with safety be asserted of volumes in the library in the Hancock house; but if there

was a collection large or small of current and classic British authors in any Boston home, it should have been in that of the bookseller Henchman's son-in-law, himself an importer of books. Doubtless it had theological tomes enough for a layman's drowsy perusal after the Sunday dinner, but if English classics in bookstores followed Berkeley's gift of them to Yale College in 1733, Milton, Addison, Steele, Cowley, and Waller would come to Boston also, with Swift, Cervantes, and even Butler and his "Hudibras." "The Lamentations of Mary Hooper" and "Remarkable Providences," "The Folly of Sinning" and the "Practice of Repentance" might be handed down from Michael Perry's ancient stock, along with the scandalous item of "nine packs of playing cards," showing incidentally that Boston people were not all so straight-laced that they might not with equal propriety have read, say, Richardson's "Pamela," even if it were supposed to be the novel which drove Jonathan Edwards from Northampton to the Stockbridge Indians. One cannot imagine that Boston escaped the literary awakening which followed Ben Franklin's raising of the blockade of current classics in 1730 by baiting the country with scraps in his almanac from world literatures, and creating an appetite for something besides "The Calling of the Jews," "Ornaments of Sion," "Sermons of Glory," and the rest of that "New England Library" which Judge Samuel

Sewall's son had gathered in the Steeple Chamber of the Old South Church, whose most entertaining volumes were "Whale Fishing in Greenland," "Purchas His Pilgrimage," and Ward's "Simple Cobler of Agawam."

By the year that young John Hancock came to live with his uncle and aunt it was her fault if she did not bring lighter books from her father's shop or her husband's for her bright nephew to read, and his fault if he did not read them in the winter evenings of 1745 and after. The "Tatler," "Spectator," and "Guardian" had been printed long enough to get between board covers. Richardson was turning out his stories, to be followed by Fielding, Smollet, and Sterne. If fiction was under a ban in Boston, Defoe's "Robinson Crusoe" should not have been debarred, as Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" was not, with its strong human interest and religious teaching. If the lad did not come in contact with some of the best books that have been written in English, it was because they were not in the Boston market nor brought out of London with other luxuries for people who could well afford them. Therefore, unless he showed a greater repugnance to reading than his later life disclosed, it may fairly be inferred that the home education in his new environment was as good as the literary taste of the period permitted.

As a matter of course he was sent to the Boston Public Latin School, the oldest educational insti-

tution in the country, known first as the South Grammar School, standing behind King's Chapel for a hundred and thirty-three years. The Puritan fathers soon after their settlement provided, in 1635, a school for teaching the higher branches, with special reference to advanced studies in the college to be founded at Newtown (Cambridge) a little later. John Cotton, minister of the First Church, had in mind the High School of his Lincolnshire Boston, founded by Philip and Mary in 1554, and with his love for both the school and college here he divided his estate between them. So John Winthrop and his companions determined that "for the common defence and for the general welfare the classical languages should be taught at the common charge"; and the General Court added, "that learning be not buried in the graves of our fathers."

Philemon Pormont was the first master. As a London boy he might have stolen into the Globe or Blackfriars theatres, unknown to his Puritan father, to see Shakespeare in one of his own plays. Daniel Maude, the second master, was an old graduate of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, nearly fifty years of age when young John Milton took his degree at Christ Church three years before Maude came to America. Even Ezekiel Cheever, who gave the Latin school a great name in the thirty-eight years of his teaching, was only six years younger than the great epic poet, who as Dep-

uty Grecian might have heard Ezekiel translate Erasmus in St. Paul's School, London, where tradition has placed in his boyhood the famous master, who died in the harness at ninety-four and was buried from his schoolhouse; a funeral oration being pronounced by his successor, and a sermon delivered later by Cotton Mather, the Magnalian and the Magnificent.

The next master to achieve distinction was John Lovell, who was in full sway when the Hancock boy was sent to mingle with a hundred others who forgathered at seven o'clock every morning in the old building on School Street. For ten years Lovell had been the embodiment of a despotism found in the schoolhouses of New England, and for thirty-two years more he was to rule as with a rod of iron. His portrait in Harvard Memorial Hall, drawn by Smibert, his pupil, "while the terrific impressions of the pedagogue were yet vibrating on his nerves," betokens a master of Young Americans. Yet, loyalist as he was, with high notions of the divine right of kings and schoolmasters, he did not entirely suppress mutterings that were to grow louder before he laid down his sceptre on April 19, 1775, when, with Earl Percy's brigade drawn up at the head of the street ready to start for Lexington, he dismissed the boys with a final command, "Deponite libros: war's begun and school's done." His son James, assistant at the other end of the room, was on the Patriot side,

and a daughter so fascinated a British officer of ordnance that in love's absentmindedness he sent to Bunker Hill twelve-pound shot for the six-pounder guns that were to open the fight, and repeated the blunder when the disgusted commander sent orders to correct it.[1]

To return to that morning when young John faced the tyrant pedagogue. His admission examination had been easy enough, — a few verses read from the King James Version of the Bible. The text-books of the first year were more formidable: "Cheever's Accidence," on its way to the eighteenth edition, "Nomenclatura Brevis," "Corderius' Colloquies," — an early start in Latin for a boy of eight. The next year came "Æsop's Fables," "Eutropius," and "Lilly's Grammar"; and so on until the fourth year, when, furnished with a desk, the boy was expected to write Latin, read Cæsar, then Cicero, Virgil, and in the sixth year the Greek of Xenophon, Homer, and the New Testament. Linguistic knowledge in that day, like sap, went from the roots upward, and language

1 "Voted, that the sum of One hundred and twenty pounds be allowed and paid unto Mr. John Lovell, for his Salary as Master of the South Grammar School for the ensuing Year." And, later in the way of promotion, "A further Sum of Forty pounds be allowed him, as an encouragement for him to remain and exert himself in the Service of the Town the ensuing Year."

A committee of fifty of the principal men of the town visited this school and others on the 4th of July, 1770, and reported that they found "all in very good order." — "Boston Town Records," 1770, pp. 23, 55.

was not acquired at sight; but it became a permanent possession which scholars carried with them to use throughout a lifetime on great occasions. From seven o'clock, or in winter eight, declensions and conjugations, accent, quantity, and versification prepared the way for the humanities and the study of divinity, which had been the main purpose of early education in the Province. After the long day of classics came an hour in penmanship, with the making and mending of quills, now a lost art in these days of "iron pens," as Carlyle called them with maledictions on their sputter, and of intermittent fountains. One autograph which became historic shows that John Hancock learned to point, nib, and handle the quill.[1]

It would be halving the story of the Latin School to drop it with the Evacuation of Boston. Men of less distinction than Cheever and Lovell followed them until Benjamin A. Gould restored much of its renown between 1814 and 1828, after which

[1] Not all his signatures are as elegant as the one which followed the Declaration of Independence. For instance, one in 1770, among those of the Selectmen of Boston, like most of the quill-pen autographs of the time, might have been written by a schoolboy with a sharp stick. The facsimile is in Winsor's "Memorial History of Boston," II, 537. "Hancock seems to have had in mind an official proportion in the dimensions of his name at the head of the Declaration." — Tudor's "Life of Otis," p. 265, note. One of his whims was for iron filings instead of sand, which our forefathers used to dash upon the wet ink as an absorbent before the day of paper blotters, and is even yet used by some members of the Senate and of the Supreme Court.

names still familiar appear among its instructors, — Bishop Wainwright, Professor Henry W. Torrey, Rev. Edward E. Hale, Dr. John P. Reynolds, and Phillips Brooks, who needs no title. Among its graduates are names of similar eminence, — Presidents Leverett, Langdon, Everett, and Eliot of Harvard, Pynchon of Trinity; Professors Childs, and Cooke; Governors, Judges, and Mayors; Robert C. Winthrop, Charles Francis Adams, Charles Sumner, Wendell Phillips, Emerson, Motley, and Parkman, with others who have been an honor to the School which started them toward distinction. Four graduates wrote their names after that of the first, whose bold signature heads the illustrious roll of Signers of the Declaration of Independence; and many others are found in the army and civil lists of the Revolution, and others still in the annals of Americans who were loyal to the royal government which had persisted here for one hundred and seventy years. And in the years of a later rebellion two hundred and seventy-six filled posts in the military and naval service, of whom fifty fell.

CHAPTER III

IN HARVARD COLLEGE

It was almost as inevitable that a Latin School graduate in the seventeenth century should enter Harvard as that the Charles River should flow into the Back Bay. In those days of the unbridged river the college was so inconveniently distant from Boston that a town boy might consider himself away from home and as far from urban attractions as he could wish to be, since to go or return he would have to take the circuitous path through Brookline, Roxbury, and the Neck or risk the uncertainties and delays of Charlestown ferry with the customary assortment of winds and weather the year through.[1] To be sure, there were fortifications against chills to be had at the Royal Exchange and other taverns, which might or might not lessen the discomforts of the way back to college after such primitive entertainments as the town then afforded, of

[1] The ferry was a source of revenue to Harvard from 1640 until a bridge was built to Charlestown in 1785, of which Hancock was the first on the list of incorporators. — Quincy's "History of Harvard," II, 271. Two hundred pounds annually were to be paid to Harvard College to compensate it for the loss of the ferry. — Mary Caroline Crawford's "Old Boston Days and Ways," p. 289.

which the Thursday Lecture was the only one sufficiently recognized by the community to cause the closing of the schools at ten o'clock on that day of the week. No great hilarity, however, was encouraged, and the half-holiday was considerably shortened by the length of the semi-political, semi-religious discourse which had been the one dissipation of the Province for a century and a half, with high days of ordination, general muster of the militia, and an occasional execution, accompanied by a sermon.

The queen of New England festivals was Commencement Day, a high day in Cambridge and a holiday in the neighborhood, shops being closed in Boston and business generally suspended. During an entire week Cambridge Common was covered with lanes of booths, inviting visitors from town and country to behold exotic wonders, to take a hand in sundry ventures of chance, to eat substantial viands, and to drink liquors of foreign and domestic brands until the result was far from Puritanic, or even classic and academic, as these terms are commonly understood by the unlearned. In fact, hilarity had reached such extremes the year before John Hancock's entrance into college that three gentlemen whose sons were to be graduated offered the authorities a thousand pounds, old tenor, if a Commencement should be held "for that year in a more private manner"; and in consideration of "the low state of the college treasury,

the extravagant expenses and disorders attending upon graduation," the offer was accepted by the Corporation vote — which the Board of Overseers straightway negatived, with an eye to the popular protest that would be sure to follow so radical a measure as the sudden discontinuance of the general and extended holiday. With the thousand pounds in view the Corporation changed its tactics and voted that "on account of the high price of provisions and the extraordinary and depressing drought, which we apprehend to be such a judgment of God as calls for fasting and mourning and not for joy and festivity, the Commencement for the present be private." Not even so were the Overseers to be defrauded of their annual outing, and the proposed substitution of a fast day got a crushing defeat. In turn the Corporation appealed to parents of the graduating class to retrench their sons' Commencement expenses "so as may best correspond with the frowns of Divine Providence, and to take effectual care to have their sons' chambers cleared of company, and their entertainments finished on the evening of said day or at furthest by next morning."

But matters did not mend for six years, when the Overseers themselves in their turn recommended to the Corporation "to take effectual measures to prevent undergraduates from having entertainments of any kind, either in the College or in any house in Cambridge after the Commencement

Day," that is, during the academic year opened by that day with unbecoming festivity. Then the Corporation took its revenge by paying no more heed to this recommendation than to advise "the Bachelors to endeavor to get away with their goods on Thursday and not to continue in College after Friday," finally shortened to " after dinner on Thursday." Thus the two branches of government tossed the question back and forth till at length the need of a fast became so evident as to secure a vote that, " Whereas in the providence of God there hath been a distressing drought whereby the first crop of hay hath been greatly diminished and is now past recovery, and a great scarcity as to kine feeding at this time, and a dark state of Providence with respect to the war we are engaged in calling for humiliation and fasting; therefore it is voted that degrees be given to candidates without their personal attendance." Later, dancing was forbidden during the week; and to the President was assigned the duty of expunging all exceptional parts from Commencement exercises, and particularly "to put an end to the practice of addressing the female sex."

It was to such features of college life that the Hancock boy was introduced on the Commencement Day when he rode over to Cambridge with his uncle Thomas and aunt Lydia in the family coach, and was presented by the uncle, a dignitary who was of sufficient importance to be invited on

one occasion at least to dine with the college authorities as a distinguished guest. It must be admitted that Freshman Hancock might have had glimpses of "exercises" on the opening day such as would not contribute to a thirst for knowledge so much as for more material delights; yet if the domestic beverages in the days of a thriving West India trade be considered, and what quantities of native and imported liquors were consumed at tavern dinners after ordinations, some allowance must be made for the celebration of the one hundred and fifteenth anniversary of the founding of the College. Indeed, the authorities relaxed somewhat after the fasting year, recommended a "repeal of the law prohibiting the drinking of punch," and passed a vote that "it shall be no offence if any scholar shall, *at Commencement*, make and entertain guests at his chamber with punch"; and a year later it was voted by both Boards that "it shall be no offence if the scholars, in a sober manner, entertain one another and strangers with punch, which as it is now usually made, is no intoxicating liquor." The historian-president adds with a judicial pronouncement which is delicious: "A reason more plausible than satisfactory, as neither Board could extend its control to the ingredients or proportions of the mixture;" suggesting that there are some things which even a College Corporation cannot regulate.

It must not be supposed that the festive side of Commencement was all that the boy of thirteen saw and heard. Early in the forenoon there was an imposing procession from Hall to Meeting-house in the order of increasing importance from Freshmen upward to the President walking alone in his majesty, followed by the Governor and his troop, who on a circuitous route to Cambridge had advertised the performances as effectually and needlessly as the street parade of the later circus announced what might be expected in the mammoth tent. Assembled on the platform built around the pulpit on the north side of the ancient edifice, civil, military, and academic dignitaries, resplendent in British uniforms of red and gold, or in ermine, velvet, and silk, presented an array of color to which the modern display of collegiate regalia is as sombre as the last leaves of autumn. Nor was there an entire absence of decoration in the audience. Indeed, color was becoming so rampant and extravagant that a law was made only four years later that "on no occasion any of the scholars shall wear any gold or silver lace or silver brocade in the College or town of Cambridge; and on Commencement Daye every candidate for his degree who shall appear dressed contrary to such regulation may not expect to receive his degree."

As for the ladies who had anticipated this high day for a year — but without co-educational ambitions — it is recorded that in 1758 one at least sat

up all night lest the arrangement of her coiffure should be disturbed; and that such was the towering height of these structures that they had to be protruded outside the carriage windows; while hoop skirts were of so "wide circumference" that the roomy family coaches could contain only two of them. On the floor the scene was little less brilliant. Coats of peach-bloom and lavender, waistcoats of satin, gold-laced and embroidered; smallclothes of velvet, ending in stockings of silk in rainbow hues, with shoes whose silver buckles flashed responses to their like at knee and stock. Certainly Commencement in the middle of the eighteenth century outshone in externals the scriptural splendor of "an army with banners."

When silence was secured President Holyoke arose from his triangular throne of turned wood behind the pulpit canopied by a sounding-board to pronounce an invocation, whose solemnity was not succeeded by a brazen blare, called "Music" in the programmes of to-day. Instead, a salutatory oration followed in Latin, addressing principalities and powers of Church and State present, with unfailing mention of lower college classes in condescending terms, and an irrepressible allusion to feminine spectators in the south gallery who, if they did not understand the unknown tongue, knew by the constricted smiles of the elders and the broader ones of the students that something interesting was being said, and they fanned them-

selves with mingled vexation, approbation, and violence. In the recorded order of names and theses Nathaniel Cotton should have maintained that "Rerum mudanum, in propriis earum Dispositionibus Conservatio, non est quotidiana Creatio." He was closely followed to detect any Arminian digression from Calvinism, or divagation towards that antipædobaptist heresy which had dethroned President Dunster a hundred years before; or again, if he had been tainted by those "dregs of papistrie," which in the guise of Episcopacy had captivated Rector Cutler of the class of 1701, President of Yale, and removed him to the pastorate of Christ Church, Boston. Whatever complexion the pronouncement had it would not meet with unqualified commendation, since theological lines were sharply drawn and there were searchings of heart for the divisions of Reuben. So likewise when John Wendell maintained that "Rhetorica est Ars alios inducendi ut Credant quidquid vult Rhetor," — with an unconscious application to a graduate who should bear his name eighty-one years later, — there were aristocratic ears that listened for allusions to "the loyal subjects of the best of monarchs," and also uneasy auditors who had hopes for his future if he should venture to mention "the sacred rights and liberties bequeathed to us by our pious fathers;" for some were beginning to have leanings toward an independence about which they said little at present. After further

discourse in Latin, degrees were conferred upon the graduating class in groups of four, and upon Bachelors of three years' standing; but honorary degrees were as rare as the return of comets, only two in one hundred and thirty-five years.

Exercises finished, the learned portion of the assembly betook itself in reverse order to the Commons Hall for substantial refreshment, and the rest departed in relaxed order to their homes or to the tents on the Common, while the undergraduates convoyed friends to their rooms, where were set forth solids and fluids whose character and strength from time to time received legislative attention from the government of the College. By nightfall the entire population of the town and strangers within its gates had attained to various degrees of their annual exaltation of spirit, academic and alcoholic.

The contrast of term days when they immediately followed Commencement must have been chilling to a Freshman like the Hancock youth. At six in the morning he had to take his seat in the front row in Holden Chapel and listen to the Scriptures read in Hebrew or Greek by the upper classes and to an exposition by President or Professor, followed by a prayer of some length. If there was a psalm sung its tune was as lugubrious as that York which Judge Sewall so loved to set. By half-past six relief came in recitation rooms, and in more welcome guise an hour after, when a clamoring

crowd jostled one another at the buttery hatch for biscuit and beer, coffee, chocolate, or milk according to their orders, given on the first Friday of the month, for the ensuing weeks.

These "sizings" or rations dispatched, in the yard or in their rooms, there were hours of study and recitation, interrupted by "bevers," between-meals bites, until dinner when all assembled in Commons Hall, sixteen at a table, to be served each with a pound of meat and vegetables in their season, brought by classmate waiters. They also kept two pewter mugs replenished with cider, circulated after the manner of loving cups, for bacilli had not then been discovered. Still, it was enjoined that drinking vessels should be scoured once a week and plates twice a quarter. With an afternoon bever and a supper of bread and milk, or of meat pie and half a pint of beer, the eating of the day was supposed to be over, at a cost of seven shillings per week. It has been observed that as the beer was made at the College brew-house it was not exceedingly strong. Nothing is said about the hardness of the cider, but as the price was raised after February first it may have been to correspond with its increased efficiency.[1]

Eating and drinking were not, however, the

[1] "They shall not frequent the company of such men as lead an ungirt and dissolute life, nor be of the artillery or train-band, nor use their mother tongue." — College Laws, in Quincy's "History of Harvard," I, 516.

principal occupation of the youth who foregathered at the College in the mid-century. Nor did athletics as now known absorb time and energy. Granting that mental discipline used to be the chief purpose of academic life, it did not much matter in what class of studies this was acquired. During the first century and a half at Harvard the curriculum accorded with the popular habits of thought and discussion, whose leaders must be trained in the science of theology, which for professional purposes included mental and moral philosophy with logic, rhetoric, and language as channels of expression. If students came with other professions than the ministry in mind, continuous linguistic studies were useful; and there was little of human knowledge then possessed that was not compassed by the instruction of tutors and professors. At all events John Hancock, son and grandson of ministers and nephew of the founder of a Hebrew professorship, could not expect to escape entirely from the traditions of his family, although he may have looked with more favor upon his uncle's book and tea trade than upon his father's ministerial career. In any case, divinity and linguistic courses were all that were to be had, and what his college companions of all sorts shared with him.

Accordingly he bent with more or less assiduity in his Freshman year to Tully, Virgil, and the Greek Testament four days in the week and on Fridays to Rhetoric, with the Greek Catechism and Ramus's

"Definitions" at the week's end. As a Sophomore he recited Burgerdiscius's "Logic," Heerboord's "Melemata," disputing Mondays and Tuesdays, reading the classics every day, and on Saturday Wollebius's "Divinity." In his Junior year there were Physics, Ethics, Metaphysics, Divinity, and Disputes. As Senior Sophister he attained to Geometry, Astronomy, Geography, and Arithmetic — a strange assignment of primary studies, perhaps as a concession to the business end of the class, and of more importance to young Hancock than Wollebius, Heerboord, and all the heavy-armed Hollanders that our forefathers brought out of Leyden and Amsterdam to Plymouth and Boston.[1] Taken all together his college course enabled the young man to discuss divine decrees, foreknowledge, predestination, and election at his uncle's fireside, as they were debated at every hearthstone in New England; also to converse in Erasmian Latin with minister and magistrate when Burgundy decanters went round the table; to keep accounts of sales and purchases by London agents; to know where were the ports to which his uncle's ships sailed when he enlarged his business.

Then there were a few collaterals of instruction

[1] The prophetic and anticipatory President Hoar urged the establishing of a chemical laboratory and an *ergasterium* "for mechanic fancies" in 1674, two hundred years before a "workshop course" began to count for a degree in some colleges. The Great and General Court declared itself against such a material and untimely innovation.

not included in the curriculum, although sometimes charged in the bills, characteristic of the period and of juvenile spirits always. Students were younger then, if not more scholastic in their behavior, and their dress if not more extravagant was at least more picturesque in the fashion of it, in which there is good reason to believe that John Hancock was a leader. Ranked according to the social importance of his family as the custom was, instead of an alphabetical order, he had one of the best seats in Chapel and Hall, with the right to help himself at table before his fellows lower down and with privileges of precedence on all occasions. His subsequent popularity must have begun in college, and his social graces and courtly manners were not after-graduation acquisitions. From certain military ambitions which he cherished at a later day it is more than probable that he practised the manly exercises of sword-play and horsemanship, together with such other accomplishments as belonged to the society gallant of the period. However this may be, he came through the perils of fagging and the risks of corporal punishment in the Library, with prayer by the President before and after, and more protracted sufferings in the Greek Catechism and Hebrew Psalter, with repetitions of the previous Sunday's sermons, not to mention uncertainties of diet which kept students in a state of intermittent remonstrance and chronic inclination to war-dances around the Rebellion Tree, foreshadowing

later gatherings about another Tree on Boston Common.

At last the annual Day of days arrived on the 17th of July, 1754, when at the age of seventeen he was listed for his degree of Bachelor of Arts, and for the title of Sir, if he should remain in residence. It appears that the Class of '54 distinguished itself by the splendor of its apparel sufficiently to provoke the sumptuary enactments already mentioned, which were passed soon after this year's Commencement, whose radiance must have been like that of the setting sun beneath the cloud-bank of a long and dull day. Possibly it was a compensation to some for the monotony of their college years. And it is fair to suppose that our gilded youth from the mansion on Beacon Hill was not surpassed in his costume by the elegance of any sartorial creations on that memorable occasion. Doubtless some of them were not inferior to that of a later graduate, who, laws or no laws to the contrary, took his degree "dressed in coat and breeches of pearl-colored satin, white silk waistcoat and stockings, buckles in his shoes, and his hair powdered according to the style of the day." If this was allowed in the early days of republican simplicity, as it was, what might have been the attire of the second colonial mid-century when the graduate burst from the chrysalis years of monastic scholasticism into the glory of his emancipation.

As for the intellectual furnishing of the Class of

1754, it could not have been mean and meagre to be able to defend theses which have been handed down with the names of the class. To be sure, the Latin phraseology seems to add to the erudite character of the subjects, as no doubt the maintaining of them in the same tongue contributed somewhat to the impression created upon one half of the audience at least. For example, when the shortest of these propositions was announced: "Anima a Deo immediate creatur, et in corpus infunditur," something of magnificence was added to the simplicity of the Biblical account of man's creation. So the disputable dogma that "Grammar determines the proper use of letters, syllables, words, and sentences in whatever language" seems less commonplace in the Latin than in the vernacular, as doubtless its defence did in the dialect of Cicero, if not in his pronunciation. Nothing so daring, however, was attempted at this Commencement as at the first one which young Hancock attended, when a Senior risked his reputation for orthodoxy by maintaining that "Diluvii Noachi causa secundaria fuit Cometae Appropinquatio." If one had defended this thesis in 1910 with two comets in sight, what fears of a greater flood than Noah's might have been inspired. In attempting to assign his possible thesis to Hancock on the faded programme of one hundred and fifty-eight years ago it seems most likely that he would illustrate this one of a dramatic complexion, to wit, that "Anger re-

quires an excited and trembling voice; Grief, slow and broken; Fear, low and hesitating; Joy, tranquil and soft; Perplexity, serious and grave." One would like to read such an argument, if translated, although it might lose thereby some of the effect which its sonorous periods had upon hearers to whom the ancient tongue was as familiar as it was to Lord Bacon when he feared to commit his greatest work to the uncertain future of his mother English.

Interesting as these scholastic exercises were to our ancestors, the longest Commencement had an end even when the speaking was protracted through the afternoon. At its close — there was no Class-Day then — John Hancock bade good-bye to his classmates, doubtless in the order of their placing on the list which had hung in the buttery for four years, printed once for all upon the programme of graduation. Did he say in the language he had been required to use during the entire course on College grounds: "Valete socii et sodales, unus et omnes"? Or, "Farewell, Henry Dwight," first on the roll and first to die, within two years? And "Good-bye, Samuel Foxcroft," the next, survivor of all fifty-three years later; and Samuel Quincy and Jonathan Webb, the next on the roll, both to outlive himself, whose name should outlast those of the nineteen others who stood together on that summer evening: William Warner and Bela Lincoln, Phillips Payson and Benjamin Church,

Samuel Marshall and Daniel Treadwell, Nathan Webb, James Allen, and Nathan Fisk, Jason Haven, Jacob Foster, Peter Powers, William Patten and Samuel West, — who lived till 1807, — and last of all Ezra Thayer, who died the year the war broke out. Of them all only one is not "lost to name and fame." Yet some did fardels bear, doctors of medicine, law, and theology; but none was to be so adorned with duplicated degrees and repeated honors as John Hancock the handsome, the popular, and the picturesque.[1]

The following letter to his sister Mary, two years his senior, was written in his last term in college: —

"HARVARD COLLEGE, May 1st, 1754.

"DEAR SISTER,

"I Believe Time slips very easie with you, I wish you would spend one Hour in writing to me, I do assure you I should take it as a great favour. There was, nay now is, a report that you are going to be married very soon, I should be Glad to know to whom. I hope you will give me an Invitation, (whether the report be true or false I cannot tell).

1 "John Hancock, A.M., also Yale, 1769, College of New Jersey, 1769; LL.D., 1792; Brown University, 1788; Fellow American Academy; Governor Massachusetts; President Continental Congress." — "Harvard Quinquennial Catalogue."

In his Yale diploma he is designated, "Johannem Hancock, Armigerum, Virum bonae, Tam moribus inculpatis, Literis ornatum, Artium Liberalium vere Facto, Tantorem munificium, nec non de Patria quam optime meritum." — From the original in the possession of Miss Edith R. Blanchard of Providence. The main features of student life in John Hancock's day are gathered from

"I hope at the Return of Mr. Cotton, you will be so good as to write to me I enjoy at present perfect health, & should be very Glad to see you.

"Accept my kind Love to you, I hope you are well, and I am

"Dear Sister,

"P.S. I give you much Joy, but shall have more reason so to do after receiving a Letter from you." [1]

"Your ever Loving Brother,
"Till Death shall separate us,
"JOHN HANCOCK."

President Quincy's "History of Harvard College" with further particulars from documents in the archives of the University.

[1] From Ms. Collection of William P. Greenough, Esq., of Boston.

CHAPTER IV

BOSTON AND BUSINESS

Unlike most graduates John Hancock did not have to confront the difficult question of what vocation he should follow. His uncle Thomas, when he adopted his brother's son, had definite intentions about perpetuating the business he had built up. There were also good and substantial reasons for the nephew to go into his uncle's warehouse and office after graduation. Possibly if his father had lived he might have been impressed with some dutiful sentiments about keeping up the ministerial succession after the manner of the Mathers and other clerical families, but other influences prevailed in the mansion of the merchant uncle, who was to show that there are ways of doing good in unprofessional careers. It may be an idle speculation, although an interesting one, to conjecture what sort of a divine John Hancock would have made; but the query should include life in the Braintree parsonage and eliminate the environment of Beacon Hill. It is more to the point to inquire about the conditions which made him a man of business before he entered upon public life.

A glance at commercial and social Boston in the middle of the eighteenth century will reveal some of the surroundings and influences into which the college graduate was entering.

To those who are familiar with the Boston of to-day it is not easy to reduce the city of 700,000 inhabitants to a town of 17,000 and from the densely and solidly built streets covering the old peninsula and much of the bay to uncrowded acres by the waterside and open home lots on the hillsides facing the ocean, on which stood the plain frame houses of a thrifty people, with here and there a more pretentious dwelling of brick or stone in the variable style now known as the Colonial and imitated with varying degrees of success. It was best seen from the harbor as the busiest port on the New England coast. The principal wharf had been growing seaward with the waxing prosperity of the town until it now reached half a mile into the bay, earning the name of Long Wharf, thrown out like a welcoming gang-plank to ships of every nation. At the sea end of it vessels of the deepest draught could be moored, and along its sunny side craft of every shape, rig, and denomination tied up for unloading and reloading. Designations now gone by distinguished the "snow" from the "ketch" and this from the "smack" and the "schooner," then a recent name improvised by a bystander when the first two-master "scooned" along the water from a Glouces-

ter shipyard in 1714.[1] Their names had often a Hebraic cast like those of their builders and captains, from John Winthrop's "Blessing of the Bay," the first craft built in New England, down to the "Samuel and Hannah," the "Mary and Elizabeth" and Andrew Eliot's "Abigail," Bartholomew Green's "Silvanus," and John Hobby's "Rebecca." Later there was a leaning towards the virtues rather than the graces, as the "Tryal," "Endeavor," and "Providence," with now and then a look downward to the water in the "Dolphin" and the "Swan," and upward to the sky in the "Lark" and the "Swallow." Hancock's sloop "Liberty" became more famous than any other craft.

The fellows who were on deck were not uniformly so sanctimonious as their scriptural prenomens might lead one to suppose, at least when they were beyond the reach of magistrates, deacons, and custom-house officials. Peletiah Hibbins, Abinadab Foxcroft, Lo-ammi Maverick[2] and their messmates were apt to return quick and confusing answers to any stroller who dropped unwelcome remarks from the dock, or became too inquisitive about the last voyage or the next one. Too much curiosity regarding cargoes and bills of lading would meet with unilluminating replies; for were not the de-

[1] In like manner on land there were vehicles of strange names: chariots, coaches, calashes, chaises, and chairs; drawn in 1742 by 418 horses, according to the enumeration of that year. — "Memorial History of Boston," II, 441.

[2] Fathergone Dinley was a widow's son.

tested Acts of Navigation passed for the benefit of England? So any impertinent inquiry as to the number and variety of flags carried would elicit a recommendation to attend strictly to the questioner's own business. Neither would every obscure landing-place be reported; for the Yankee skipper knew that a broad bottom could enter a shallow harbor and that a short keel could make a long voyage. Had not the Pilgrims come over wintry seas in the eighty-foot "Mayflower"?[1]

In a single year five hundred and forty vessels, not including coasters and fishing smacks, cleared from the port of Boston, carriers for all the colonies, the West Indies, and some parts of Europe, with now and then a wanderer to the Orient and an estray to the African coast, where New England rum was prized above black captives taken in tribal war or otherwise, and one cargo could always be exchanged for another with great profit and little risk, especially when royalty was encouraging the slave trade. Nor did captains buy their ships abroad so often as they sold them there. As early as 1738 forty topsail ships had been built in a single year in Boston yards, some of them to be sold after disposing of their freight. As for masts and spars the woods were full of them for home use and for export to British navy-yards with the

[1] Smuggling in the eighteenth century was a reputable and profitable occupation, practised in England and America. — Belcher's "First American Civil War," I, 12.

accompaniments of tar and pitch from the pines of Maine. The ropewalks of the North End supplied cordage, — also a boisterous gang who were ready for any radical movement or street row, while their political kin, the caulkers, are said to have given to primary meetings the name of caucuses.

Across the main wharf on the north side stood a long row of warehouses containing consignments from ports far and wide; a queer collection of the products of many climes, their diverse odors struggling for preëminence, among which the pungency of molasses dripping from a thousand hogsheads was always attractive to bees, boys, and distillers. A million and a quarter gallons of rum was the annual product in New England, to be flavored with numberless casks of sugar and sundry products of the Spice Islands. So important was the molasses and sugar trade that the Act of Parliament restraining it was a greater grievance to the colonists than the Stamp Act itself. In the warehouses were casks of choicer liquors, bearing strange marks branded on them, and hampers of bottles rarer still, as trade and commerce enriched the prosperous merchants of the metropolis. Yet they were not drunkards nor brewers and concocters of adulterated abominations, nor was their trade chiefly in spirituous liquors. Gathered from bays and shoals along the coast as far north as Newfoundland were stacks of cured fish, to be shipped

to countries which kept their frequent fasts, though not after the manner of the New Englander in his occasional calls to "fasting, humiliation, and prayer" when threatened with royal displeasure, epidemic, or drought. Besides the export of that fish whose image came to surmount the pinnacle of the temple where the laws of the Commonwealth were made, and to symbolize the principal source of its prosperity, there were stores of oil and whalebone from near and far-off waters, bales of fur from wintry woods, bundles of clapboards, laths, and shingles, with such other lumber and timber as would not be missed from virgin forests and was in demand in depleted lands across the sea. In exchange for these domestic superfluities came back foreign wares and fabrics of every sort and quality, satins and velvets, damasks and brocades, services of silver and china, linens for the table and wardrobe finer than homespun, and such ornate furniture as was found in the stately homes of England and France. All this and more went in and out the storehouses on Long Wharf or its companions, — Scarlett's, Wentworth's, Oliver's, Gray's, and Hancock's, as they jutted out from the crescent shore like a machicolated border to the commercial town.[1] But Long Wharf was its pride, and up from its pavement ran the principal thoroughfare, King Street, now State, to the most

[1] Hancock's wharf, from its position, stretched farther seaward than the others.

important edifice of the colonial period, the Town House, where the character of the Province was molded far more than in the Parliament Hall of Rufus at Westminster, with all its chartering of rights and restricting of privileges.

The town-meeting as an Anglo-Saxon institution from the days of the folk-mote to the present is so familiar to the inhabitants of the countryside that its importance is often forgotten amidst the commonplace routine of its doings. There is little show of the people's real majesty as they talk and toil through the March day on matters of local interest mentioned in the warrant; as, for instance, to see if the town will build a bridge or repair a road, borrow money or raise its annual tax. Now and then more important questions arise which are not left as in cities to a governing board, but to the mind and vote of each citizen, rich or poor, informed or ignorant. The place of meeting thus becomes the symbol of corporate will and authority, the meeting-house of the town, however many and diverse may be its churches. The day when the meeting-house served both religious and secular purposes had long passed before the town of Boston had completed its one hundred and twentieth year, in 1750. The great fire of 1711 had destroyed the town house of 1657–8, and in rebuilding it the next year it was agreed to construct a house to accommodate both the town and the colony. Damaged by fire in 1747, it was repaired the year

following, and is now known as the Old State House. In the 1750's it was the head-centre of the town, up to which ran the main street from Long Wharf, as has been observed. It was a stately edifice for its day, a hundred and ten feet in length, thirty-eight feet wide, and three stories high, surmounted by a tower in three orders of architecture, Tuscan, Doric, and Ionic. Its lower floor for more than half a century was "a covered walk for any of the inhabitants," an exchange for men of business and affairs who were accustomed to assemble there at one o'clock every day and discuss informally such matters as were uppermost, strike bargains, forecast the weather, the crops, the fishing, and the royal policy. On the next floor were the halls of the Great and General Court, and legislative committee rooms over these on the third floor. But popular sentiment on any measure, from the governor's salary to the port bills, and the general opinion on any man, from the governor to the pirate in the offing, could be ascertained without difficulty among the ten pillars which supported the halls of legislation, just as the citizens who moved around them upheld the government so long as the majority — a small one — could endure its demands made through ten royal governors in the provincial period, from 1692 to 1775.[1]

[1] Interesting particulars about many of these old-time worthies are given in "Dealings with the Dead, by a Sexton of the Old School," I, II.

It was a distinguished succession of men who came and went to and from that Town House of Boston before and after the restoration of 1748. To mention names of representatives to the General Court in the decade now under consideration and the following will be sufficient: Harrison Gray, James Bowdoin, William Cooper, John Phillips, James Otis, Samuel Adams, Oxenbridge Thacher, John Adams, John Hancock, and others who were famous men in their day, the pre-revolution period. There also were seen the flowing robes of judges and lawyers who found plenty of business in these stirring times. Divines too dropped in at midday, keeping up the tradition if not the authority of ministers who ruled with magistrates in the Puritan period. No such forum can now be found in all the land where men are rated and opinions weighed for what they are worth.

It is characteristic of the town that booksellers' shops should gather around this focus of its commercial and political life. Schools and a near-by college had made the community one of more than ordinary intelligence and of considerable cultivation. There were merchants who had not forgotten their Latin and Greek, and who could appreciate a classical allusion and quote a line from Virgil or Homer. As for Scriptural quotations, they recognized them when Dr. Byles or Reverend Samuel Sewall sprung them upon a public meeting in the

original tongues. Educated in these, it is not strange that the learned classes created a demand for the ancient classics, which constituted a good part of booksellers' stocks, to which were added the writings of men whose intellectual food had been the old literatures. From the present viewpoint this product was dreary reading, but that generation was not ready to accept something better from English sources. It was heroic in its mental exercises, its intellectual digestion unimpaired by fiction, and its psychic medicines as staggering as the nauseous compounds which only the fittest survived, and the weak regarded as a visitation of Providence. Reading was then one of the duties, not a diversion; an "exercise," not a recreation. Accordingly, the writers of Queen Anne's reign and later were not largely ordered from London agents who were sending every other luxury to Boston aristocrats and scholars. They preferred Cotton Mather's "Last Discourses in Nature with Religious Improvements," the beginning here of a drift away from a strictly theological literature. But belles-lettres were slow to arrive. Cox's catalogue of "books on all the arts and sciences" for sale at the Lamb on the south side of the Town House, contained eight hundred titles, largely theological, classical, and historical; but poetry, which for the New Englander had been a relief to his gloom or an expression of it, as Young's "Night Thoughts," for example, was represented by Prior, Otway,

Shadwell, and Company, "limited" in genius, and by a few copies of Congreve, Wycherley, and Aphra Behn which had come over as stowaways and were properly regarded as unwholesome aliens and unwelcome. An occasional copy of Swift's "Miscellanies," the "Tatler," "Guardian" and "Spectator" might creep in, but, strangely, Shakespeare and Milton were not represented in the above list.

Other booksellers who were established in the vicinity of the Town House were in 1750 successors of earlier members of the guild; Samuel Phillips in Cornhill, John Checkley "over against the west end of the Town House at the sign of the Crown and Blue Gate," who was prosecuted for calling Congregational ministers schismatics in "A Plea for the Church of England"; Benjamin Eliot, under the Exchange, James Rivington, of London repute, John Mein, who established the first circulating library, Daniel Henchman, close by at the corner of Cornhill, called the most eminent and enterprising bookseller that appeared in all British America before 1775, a publisher of books printed for him in London and Boston, also proprietor of the first paper-mill in America. His apprentice and son-in-law Thomas Hancock had his bookstore near the water in Ann Street by the drawbridge until 1730, when he added general merchandise, increased his fortune, and became one of the principal commercial persons of New England. Envious persons

asserted that he made the bulk of his fortune by importing tea in hogsheads from the Dutch island of St. Eustace and selling it to army posts, paying duties upon a few chests only for form's sake.

This distant view of the commercial and intellectual aspect of the thriving town twenty years before the outbreak against the mother country indicates the daily life into which young John Hancock entered under the patronage of his prosperous uncle. Doubtless the daily round of it was commonplace and tiresome at ledger and letter book, among bales and casks, bundles and boxes. Yet it was no worse than the life many men were leading who became distinguished for something more than success in trade. With these townsmen he was brought in contact in the market-place, on the wharves, and in the streets which ran up the slope or crossed these on the amphitheatre side of the town facing the harbor. He met them to the most profit in the post-prandial stroll and talk on 'change at the Town House, in the bookshops where Harvard men were sure to be found, and also in another building which stood next in importance to the one that has been mentioned, Faneuil Hall.

Peter Faneuil, born in New Rochelle, New York, in 1700, like John Hancock inherited the bulk of his fortune from an uncle, and at the time of his death in 1742 was accounted the richest man in Boston. His house and grounds on Tremont Street, opposite King's Chapel, if they could be

restored would be the envy of dwellers on the Back Bay. The fortunate nephew did not fail to keep up the grandeur and luxury of his predecessor, ordering from London a fortnight after the "generous and expensive funeral" a handsome chariot with two sets of harness "having the family arms on the same." Also five pipes of Madeira, "the best, for the use of my house; and the latest best book on cookery, of the largest character, for the benefit of the maid's reading." Although he exacted justice in settling with his uncle's debtors, and was shrewd in continuing his business, he was also public spirited and benevolent towards the community in which his fortune had been amassed.

The question of a public market had disturbed the old town as much as it does modern cities, with the antagonism of private enterprise against general convenience. Three market buildings had been abandoned and one torn down when Faneuil offered to build a creditable one at his own expense, and generously enlarged his proposal after it had been reluctantly and ungraciously accepted by a majority of only seven votes out of seven hundred and twenty-seven. It was two years in building; but the vote was then unanimous that it was a "most generous and noble benefaction." A large and distinguished delegation conveyed to the donor most hearty thanks for so bountiful a gift with the desire to perpetuate his memory by naming it Faneuil Hall. This was gratifying to the builder,

and also seasonable; for the first annual town meeting held in the spacious edifice was the occasion, on March 14, 1742, of delivering his eulogy by John Lovell, master of the Latin School, who dwelt upon his private charities and public munificence, alluding to "this building erected at immense charge, for the convenience and ornament of the town, as incomparably the greatest benefaction ever yet known to our Western shore." For nineteen years it was the daily resort of the town in its buying and selling on the first floor, and above citizens met in the capacity of freemen loyal to the crown, with an outlook sometimes on the part of an increasing number toward an unrestricted liberty of self-rule. This building was burned on the 13th of January, 1761, and with it the king's portrait which had been hung within; an omen to some that the period of loyalty was passing away. The new edifice which the town erected after some hesitation became the scene of revolutionary debate, and of subsequent congratulation, until in 1805 a third story was added and the hall widened thirty feet, symbolizing the broader views and the rapid growth of the town under democracy. The eulogies and discussions heard then belong to the later period of independence; but the first hall and market were in importance the second meeting-place of the inhabitants during John Hancock's first seven years among the business activities of the town, which may be considered the years of his apprenticeship

and preparation for conditions which were to follow.

Life in Boston, however, was not wholly commercial, a thing entirely of trade, barter, and shipping. Then as now these were the business of the daytime, when the maxims of "Poor Richard" were quoted and observed by a thrifty people as the gospel of wealth; but when the day was over there were diversions in which a town of seventeen thousand inhabitants found relief from activities far less strenuous and wearing than those of the present. As competition was moderate, no trusts and syndicates crowding the individual trader and producer to the wall, extremes of fortune were less frequent and life was saner and less feverish than it now is. In consequence amusements were wholesome, the people contenting themselves with entertainments which did not violate somewhat severe ideas that still persisted in the shadow of Puritan traditions, which themselves had lost much of their original strictness. The Sabbath, as they continued to call the first day of the week, was kept with restraint from Saturday's sunset till Sunday's, but the Thursday lecture was not as formerly the chief relaxation of ordinary weeks when no tragedy or semi-tragedy was enacted on the scaffold or at the whipping-post. Complaints were heard that this half-religious, half-political lectureship was not attended as of yore, and that the times were degenerating; a

species of lament which will always be uttered until the limit of decline is reached and catastrophe introduces a new order.

If it is asked what diversions met the natural demand, according to the approach of any generation to what is reasonable and wholesome, it may be premised that appetites were not jaded and palled in the period under consideration. On the other hand, it will be borne in mind that Arcadian simplicity did not prevail in a seaport town within six weeks' sail of London, when citizens of both places were going and coming with increasing frequency. Moreover, the wealthiest Bostonians had their agents and correspondents in the British metropolis, charged to keep them informed of society doings, customs, and fashions, which were followed here so far as the religious and social atmosphere permitted. Again, it must not be forgotten that there was a sort of court circle in the capital of the Bay Province composed of officials representing the crown and government, from the royal governor down to the customs officers, and from the commander of his majesty's forces to the subaltern who wore the glaring uniform of the army. Then there were families who were loyal supporters and ardent admirers of these representatives of royalty, and the lines of social distinction between the civil and official upper classes were not always sharply drawn. Interchange of courtesies and hospitalities thus became

a marked feature of high life, and of lower, too, in Boston Town.

As the political element was symbolized by the Town Hall, and the commercial by Faneuil Hall, so the social life found its emblem in the stately mansion known as the Province House, the official residence of the royal governors after 1716, although most of them had their country houses in Milton, Roxbury, or Cambridge. This lordly edifice of five floors had its broad lawn, shady with trees, and its terraced gardens running up the declivity opposite the old South Church to High Street, which ran from Cornhill to Roxbury. Within the house was the governor's office and also furnished apartments for distinguished guests, with banqueting rooms where they could meet the aristocracy of the province, the few who could grace a royal court in costume and manners, in fashions, display, and civility. And here and there, radiating from "this central scene of the chief pagentries, gayeties, and formalities of the king's vice-court in Boston," which Hawthorne has enshrined in legend, on hillsides and within spacious grounds were other mansions with wide halls, carved stairways, panelled drawing-rooms, and dining rooms whose furnishings were the token of abounding hospitality, itself the principal entertainment of an opulent minority and many imitators, according to their several ability. How lavish good cheer could be in a day when appetites were keen and the cost of

provisions small is indicated by the traveller Bennett, whose manuscript has been a mine of information to writers on this period. According to this careful observer Boston was well served with everything that the country afforded; meats at one and two pence a pound, a haunch of venison for half a crown, a good turkey for two shillings, one-third the price in London, a goose for ten pence, fowls and chickens for two and three pence and wild pigeons for three pence a dozen. Fresh cod could be had for two pence, and a salmon of fifteen pounds for a shilling, and great lobsters for three half pence. "As to drink," he says, "they have no good beer in this country. Medium wines and rum punch are the liquors they drink and cider at three shillings a barrel."

With this enumeration of prices it is noticeable that the discussion of the high cost of living as well as the cost of high living is conspicuously absent. On the contrary, the comparison that is frequently made with London prices must have induced emigration to a land of cheap profusion. The political economist will offset these advantages with the low price of labor, but it was higher than in England then as now, and the two factors together promoted immigration in days when no passenger agents were painting the glories of America in sunset colors of purple and gold. The colonist found the abundance real and the crown officer found hospitality generous, and its inter-

change an agreeable diversion. Aside from formal occasions similar entertainment was furnished when "for their domestic amusement every afternoon, after drinking tea, the gentlemen and ladies walk in the Mall,[1] and from thence adjourn to one another's houses to spend the evening, — those that are not disposed to attend the evening lecture; which they may do if they please six nights in seven the year round." There were also athletic sports, riding, hunting, skating; sleigh-rides in winter to some country tavern, followed by supper and a dance, and in summer excursions down the harbor, picnics on the islands, tea-parties in the country, and homeward drives by moonlight.

Beyond these social entertainments of a family and friendly character, and the lectures, there was not much to call staid folk away from their firesides, although these were not always comfortable in the period of open fireplaces when wood in town was one of the most expensive articles of housekeeping, though it could be had in the country for the cutting. As early as 1717 importing of sea coal from Louisburg was considered by the town. In the dearth of evening amusements the selectmen of Boston did not permit dramatic plays or music halls; but a company of "restive persons" set

[1] John Hancock helped to adorn it by setting out a row of lime trees opposite his estate. He also erected a stand on the Common and furnished a band to give concerts on pleasant afternoons. — Mary F. Ayer's "Early Days on Boston Common," p. 22.

up an assembly, to which some of the ladies resorted. But they were looked upon as "none of the nicest in regard to their reputation"; and there was talk of suppressing this movement, so incongruous to the religious and sober sentiments of a part of the community. It persisted, however, and "consisted of fifty gentlemen and ladies of fashion in the town." The chronicler adds: "They don't seem to be dispirited nor moped for want of diversion, but dress and appear as gay as courtiers in England on a coronation or birthday. And the ladies here visit, drink tea, and neglect the affairs of their families with as good grace as the finest ladies in London." An account of what they wore on great occasions would rival anything in the society columns of modern newspapers.

For rural sports there was shooting in woods abounding in game and fishing in streams that needed no restocking. Frequent musters of militia combined diversion with military duty and display, cultivating loyalty to the crown, and unconsciously educating a growing people toward eventual independence through strife, of which fanatics only had as yet dared to dream. Then there was some horseplay in town and country which smacked of the rude sports of Old England in an age when the finer sensibilities were at a discount. The middle and lower classes had their own ways of entertaining themselves after the workday was done. Taverns were then, as the saloons are now, the club-rooms of

the commonalty, except that the public house bar-room was not avoided by a respectable contingent, as the dram-shop now is. Poins and Bardolph, sitting on the wall bench, saw an officer, by no means a Falstaff, drop in for a drink, and they might themselves be invited to take a dram with him or some well-to-do tradesman. There were hostelries also that were in high favor with the aristocracy and became noted resorts. The Admiral Vernon Tavern down by the water and the Crown Coffee House at the lower end of King Street where Long Wharf began, the Blue Anchor by Oliver's Dock, the Ship Tavern at Clark's Wharf, the Sun and the Half Moon and the Golden Ball near by were resorts where yarns of seafarers were spun for the delectation and astonishment of landsmen. Higher up were inns where men of trade and politics were accustomed to meet, especially at the Royal Exchange by the Town House. Next to this official edifice the tavern close by became the head centre of the community, dignified after the fire of 1747 by the temporary sessions of the General Court. There also the young bloods of the town "spent their evenings in drinking, gaming, and recounting their love affairs." The Masonic fraternity were glad to patronize brother Luke Vardy, keeper of the inn and its bar. What was sold there might have helped start the scrimmage which ended in the first bloody encounter of the Revolution, called the Massacre, which took place in front of

this tavern. It was a favorite haunt of the British officers, as was the British Coffee-house, noted for the performance of Otway's "Orphans," which caused a law to be enacted in 1758 against stage plays. The Bunch of Grapes in King Street was the rallying-place of Whigs when rebellion was rising; and here the first grand lodge of Masons was organized on July 20, 1733, by Henry Price, a Boston tailor, who had received authority from Lord Montague, Grand Master of England. The Blue Anchor around the corner had always been a resort of the magistrates and clergy, who were usually cheek by jowl in political and social affairs and gave official and professional dignity to the old inn. Among Chief Justice Sewall's notes in his diary this one is often recurring, — "The deputies treated and I treated." On civil and ecclesiastical occasions of importance clerical and lay dignitaries together ran up an imposing score for wines and spirits, relieving and enlivening their normal solemnity.

In political distinction the Green Dragon in Union Street surpassed all the rest. It was at this tavern that the promoters of revolt against British domination enlisted useful allies from shipyards, ropewalks, and docks. Here were held caucuses which were managed by a few leading politicians like Sam Adams and Dr. Warren, who gave to some master mechanic the honor of presiding, and thus won the favor of his guild. There

is reason to believe that the last meeting held there hatched the plot to destroy the tea, as afterward the club changed its headquarters.

There were other clubs, meeting at other taverns and at private houses, as relations between the province and the crown became strained. The radical doings of the Sons of Liberty may not have been helped on by their meeting in the office of a distillery, but these democratic mechanics were in dangerous proximity to an unfailing source of bravado and disorder. Some of their lawlessness and vandalism had best be accounted for and excused on the ground of patriotic zeal being inflamed by artificial stimulants; the wanton destruction of Governor Hutchinson's collections of art and literature, for example.

All together the fifty or more taverns, inns, and coffee-houses which were thriving in Boston in the eighteenth century indicate the social and festive disposition of its citizens, or perhaps the recognized need of counteracting chilly winds in their possible effect upon character. Taking them together, their stately dinners, evening assemblies, afternoon tea drinkings, tavern routs, and such lectures as were provided from Sunday to Saturday for the sober-minded, it may be concluded that the inhabitants of the provincial capital were not far behind London itself in the variety and manner of their entertainments, the drama excepted.

This outline of commercial, political, and social

Boston may help one to understand the life which a young man of fortune and fashion led in the middle of the eighteenth century. Republican ideas were not yet common, even if democratic manners here and there prevailed along the wharves, in shipyards, and to some extent in the countryside. There were grumblings and complaints enough against royal governors, but tokens of respect and forms of loyalty persisted, with much evasion of laws which restricted and oppressed. Besides, there was always the controlling power of the aristocracy, loyal to the crown and on terms with its deputies and officials; the class which made the unwritten laws of fashion in sentiment as well as in costume and custom; the folk who were not ready to contemplate changes from bad to worse, from known conditions to those unknown, uncertain, and untried. In this circle was Thomas Hancock's nephew, with no revolutionary notions in his head as yet, going to his business apprenticeship as to a graduate school day by day, prominent in the gayeties of his set, flattered no doubt by queenly dames and smiled upon by fair daughters, whose fathers could not disapprove of an exemplary young man, prospective heir to a large business, fortune, and the lordliest mansion on Beacon Hill with its crowning acres, to warehouse, stores, and wharf, with ships in the harbor and on the seas.

CHAPTER V

IN LONDON

This routine of business and round of social life was continued for six years. At the expiration of this term of practical apprenticeship Thomas Hancock had seen enough of the young man's fidelity and capacity to warrant further preparation for the growing responsibilities that were likely to fall upon his nephew at his own decease. In the close and constant relations of American trade to the controllers of it in Great Britain it was of advantage to know as much as possible of foreign methods and of the lords of trade and finance. Something could be learned by correspondence and from agents, but more by personal acquaintance and presence in the metropolis. Accordingly Thomas Hancock determined to send his nephew to London in 1760, he being then twenty-three years of age and a most presentable young man. There is no evidence, however, that there were "melting persuasions and wonderful melting assurances from the Lord that he must go to England," such as Increase Mather had on a certain occasion, and which others have had since his day. To prepare the way for him the uncle wrote to his London agents: —

"GENTN. BOSTON, May 21, 1760.

"I have given my Nephew Mr. John Hancock, who has been with me many years in Business an oppor'y of Going to London to see my Friends & Settle my Acc'ts with whom they are open, & he has Taken his Passage in Capt Patten on board the ship Benjamin & Samuel. will Sail in about Ten days from this date, by him I shall write you again, & I am to desire you to be so kind as to provide him with good Lodgings where you think will be most convenient for him with Reputable people. he goes with Gov'r Pownall, and on his Return I propose to Take him in a Partner with me in Business. Should he be Taken on his Passage & Carried to France or else where I have given him leave to draw upon you for what money he may want. I desire you will please to pay his Bills & charge the same to my Acc't

"I am Gent'n Your most obed't & Humb Serv

"THOS HANCOCK"

"You will Supply my Nephew Mr. John Hancock what money he may want for expenses in England & answer such Bills as I may Draw upon you from hence.

"Messrs Kilby Barnard & Parker
"Merchants London."[1]

On May 23 he wrote another letter to them in which he remarked, "He is a sober Modest Young Gentleman." The substance of the above letter was also written to Treothick, Apthorp, and Thomlinson, and to Wright and Gill, Hungerford

[1] In this and the following five extracts from letters the author is indebted to the Librarian of the New England Historic Genealogical Society for the privilege of copying unpublished manuscript material from the Letter Books of Thomas and John Hancock in the possession of the Society.

Spooner, Thomas Lane, Thomas Griffiths, Thomas Bristol, and William Jones, London.

The following letter of June 7, to "John Pownall, Esq'r, Secre'y," fixes the date of sailing and price of passage.

"Sir. Inclosed you have a letter for your Brother and his Excellency Gov'r Pownall, who embarked on board the Ship Benjamin and Samuel Capt. Patten, 2d Inst., and I wish you may have a happy Sight of him before this reaches you. the Winds have proved Contrary for three Days past, which gave Mrs. Hancock & me great uneasiness, but hope all is well. . . . you have likewise a Rec't for one hundred & fifty Pounds Sterling paid Mr. Benj'a Hallowell owner of the Ship Benjamin and Samuel for his Passage to London, all which I am desired by your good Brother to forward you."

In a letter to John, June 14, he wrote: —

"After you sailed we had E. & N.E. Winds & Dirt. Mrs. Hancock was very uneasy, I told her all was well, Our best Respects to Gov'r Pownall, hope to hear you had a good Passage. This goes by way of Lisbon."

The next day he wrote to Kilby, Barnard, and Parker: —

"Should he not arrive in any Reasonable Time, or be Taken I desire you to open his Letter, & procure Payment of the Bills there Inclosed."

To John, July 5: —

"Let me know who Receives you with Respect. Write me how the World goes on yt Side of the Water, be frugal of Expences, do Honor to your Country & furnish Your Mind with all wise Improvements. Keep the Pickpockets from my Watch. God bless you & believe me, Your Loving Uncle."

After three months his anxiety was over, as Governor Pownall had written him on July 12 of their arrival; to whom he wrote on the 24th of September: —

"I have great Pleasure in hearing of your Safe Arrival in England. We return your Excellency many Thanks for your great Civilitys to Mr. Hancock he writes me fully of it, & gratefully Acknowledges your many favors to him. I am much obliged to you also."

He wrote John to get

"a present worth 2 or 3 guineas for Mrs. Lydia Bastide in Mrs. Hancock's name, with her love to her & our compliments to the Family; but by no means Lodge there."

Foreign travel and residence abroad were more common in the years of colonial dependence than at a later period when independent citizens of America were not free from unpleasant sentiments occasioned by separation from the old home. Sons of prosperous families saw something of Oxford and Cambridge in supplementing their education, and other sons were sent on business errands or for informing travel. Packets were slower than modern steamers, but the times were less strenuous and six weeks then were as six days now.

In these forty days the young man would not have an altogether dreary voyage, and he certainly had good company, since his uncle had been able to place him in charge of Governor Pownall,[1] who,

[1] "Governor Pownall was treated with all possible respect when he embarked, both Houses of Legislature accompanying him to his barge." — "Thomas Pownall," by C. A. W. Pownall, London, 1908, p. 159.

on his return home after three years of strong and discreet service in the Bay Colony, was to be continued in office as lieutenant-governor of New Jersey and governor of South Carolina, all to be followed by a distinguished career in parliament, where he opposed the measures of the government against the colonies. In such a man's company the young American had an opportunity to learn useful things about the land which colonists still called the "old home," and it is easy to imagine that social advantages were made available to the creditable Bostonian on his arrival in the metropolis. As to other features of the voyage, the drinks would be better than the meats, and reading might be as heavy as the copy of Erasmus which Judge Sewall took to enliven the long days at sea some years before.

Arrived in London, there was enough to interest an American in a city of 650,000 inhabitants. The Seven Years' War was over; an empire in the East had been won at Plassey, and another in the West on the Plains of Abraham, with the French driven from the field of Minden, and their fleet ruined at Quiberon Bay. Victory had followed the English flag in every quarter of the globe. Old Europe was passing into the modern, and a new nation was beginning to evolve out of chaos in the American wilderness. Just then it was Great Britain's most valuable dependency, and the nation, supreme on land and sea, with London as its capital, had

every reason to congratulate itself in the year 1760.[1]

On the 25th of October the king, in whose reign so much had been accomplished, fell dead, and his grandson succeeded him as George the Third. At the funeral John Hancock was a spectator and saw the regal display in the day of England's supremacy. He could look upon the new king with whom he was to have trouble some years later, but his majesty would not have believed that a young man from one of the colonies could give him annoyance in the future more than in the hour of his own and the nation's pride. Nor did the provincial himself dream of such a possibility. Like all colonists visiting the mother country he would be profuse in expressions of loyalty, and duly impressed with a royal pomp which the present generation has witnessed in two funeral processions within a dozen years.

George the Second had ended his reign with honor to himself and the nation, with a united ministry and an empire encircling the globe. His successor ascended the throne under more favorable circumstances than any predecessor of the house had enjoyed. With his birth in England prejudice against his family as foreign born ceased. He had none of the vices which strained respect for royalty

[1] An interesting contemporary account of the capture of Quebec is given by Chaplain Cotton in a letter to Grenville, September 20, 1759, in "Grenville Correspondence," I, 325.

in some of his ancestors. Parties and factions had been absorbed in a general harmony, having found a leader in Pitt, who presided over the councils of the nation with the prestige of genius. Further conquest or peace was within the choice of the new king, and general support would have been accorded any measure within the people's power. It was high noon at the Court of St James. Horace Walpole says that "a passionate, domineering woman, and a favorite without talents drew a cloud over this shining prospect." The woman was the king's mother, who had never ceased to iterate to the Prince of Wales, "Be king, George, be king!" The favorite was the Scotch John Stuart, third Earl of Bute, Groom of the Stole, whom his royal master named for the Cabinet at the first meeting of the Council. And the king's first speech was for "a bloody and expensive war to obtain an honorable and lasting peace," the stale plea of barbarism. It took twenty-four hours of appeal by Pitt, Mansfield, and other wise counsellors before the royal George would allow the spoken words to be printed for public reading in the softened form of "an expensive but just and necessary war, and an honorable peace in concert with our allies." He was trying to observe his mother's command, with which he was in full sympathy. Besides, he had a will of his own, an obstinacy which in a king was dignified as firmness. When he talked of royal prerogative, more and more

popular jealousy began to spring up. "No petticoat government, no Scotch favorite" was placarded at the Royal Exchange and at Westminster Hall. The unwashed mob in the streets and theatres made gross and insulting remarks to and about George and his domineering mother, who in vain pleaded to be declared Princess Mother, a title for which there was no precedent, although it was deserved by reason of her son's obsequiousness to her.

It would be strange if the alert American did not read the posters and hear much discussion of the new king's unpopular subjection. He would also learn of his first address to Parliament, long and dull, written by Lord Harwicke and amended by Pitt. He would hear that the royal revenue had been fixed at £800,000 a year, and would think it was a liberal allowance to a king who travelled little, as £50,000 was to his counselling mother, who had obtained £10,000 more from her son in addition to £4,000 from her Duchy of Cornwall, although she was living in parsimonious privacy, and succeeded in keeping her son almost inaccessible. As for the favorite, Bute, he had the money drawn from the Electorate of Hanover entirely under his direction.

It is not to be supposed that the young Bostonian had so much concern about the home policy and affairs of the king and the composition of his Cabinet as about his colonial rule and the advice of his ministers. The interference of his predecessors had been so slight that colonists had become

accustomed to practical freedom in the management of their affairs, and the only question that would disturb the American would be, Will this freedom continue under the new régime? At first, however, he would be diverted by the pageants and processions which the populace witnessed in the year of his sojourn at the capital; the funeral of the second George, obsequies which were repeated for the fourth time in 1910, just one hundred and fifty years later, with solemn pomp and sincerer mourning.

On October 29, 1760, he wrote his step-father:—

"I am very busy in getting myself mourning upon the Occasion of the Death of his late Majesty King George the 2d, to which every person of any Note here Conforms even to the deepest mourning. . . . Every thing here is now very dull. All Plays are stopt and no Diversions are going forward, so that I am at a loss how to dispose of myself. On Sunday last the Prince of Wales was proclaim'd King thro' the City with great Pomp and Joy. . . . I am not more particular in the Circumstances of the King's Death, as I imagine you will have the Accounts long before this Reaches you."

He also complains to his step-father that he has received no replies to several letters he has written him and adds:—

"I much long to hear of my Mother, has she her health pray write me particularly, to whom present my most Dutifull Regards, and Acqaint her I am very well and hope to have the pleasure of seeing her by next June or sooner."

His brother Ebenezer evidently treated him

better, as on the 27th of December he wrote in reply to a letter sent seven weeks before: —

"I have before me your agreeable letter of November 6th by Capt. Bride, and desire you will write me by every opportunity, and acquaint me more particularly with the Circumstances of my Uncle's Family. I am Glad to hear that you are well, and earnestly beg you will give great attention to business and let your Conduct be such as to merit the Esteem of all about you, and remember that the Diligent Hand maketh Rich. I Expect on my Return to find you a Compleat Merchant.

"I observed by your letter our Sister is married, and that you were with them at the Celebration of it, I wish them great Happiness and satisfaction, and hope they will meet with nothing to Interrupt their Quiet, they have my best wishes. . . .

"I have lately been ill, but am upon the Recovery, hope soon to get abroad again.

"Tell Hannah that at Mr. Barnard's where I am ill, is a young woman who is Remarkably Tender and Kind to me in my illness, and often brings her to my mind; that I am as well attended to as I could ever desire, and that I am very well off, but had much rather be ill, if I must be so, where my Aunt and she is, But that this young woman is exactly the Image of her in Respect of a good and tender Nurse." [1]

To his uncle he wrote on January 14, 1761, a letter which shows what a faithful correspondent he was, saying that on his arrival he wrote "by the Packett" and since by thirteen other ships. The uncertainty of letters reaching their destination is indicated by the remark: —

[1] For the full text of these three abridgments see "Mass. Hist. Soc. Proceedings," XLIII, 193–200.

"I am very sorry that I have been so unlucky in Regard to my Letters not Reaching you, and never Intended to be Remiss in that Respect, and should you Receive all my Letters I am well Satisfied you and my Aunt will not Think me Blameable."

The next letter is largely about business affairs in Nova Scotia, with a note of personal interest toward the end of it as follows:—

"I observe in your Letter you mention a Circumstance in Regard to my Dress. I hope it did not Arise from your hearing I was too Extravagant that way, which I think they can't Tax me with. At same time I am not Remarkable for the Plainess of my Dress, upon proper Occasions I dress as Genteel as any one, and can't say I am without Lace. I Endeavor in all my Conduct not to Exceed your Expectations in Regard to my Expences, but to Appear in Character I am Obliged to be pretty Expensive. I find Money some way or other goes very fast, but I think I can Reflect it has been spent with Satisfaction and to my own honour. I fear if you was to see my Tailor's Bill, you would think I was not a very plain Dressing person. I endeavour to be in Character in all I do, and in all my Expences, which are pretty large I have great Satisfaction in the Reflection of their being incurrd in Honorable Company and to my Advantage. I shall be mindfull to send by the first Opportunity the Mitts for my Aunt and the Shoes for you, with a Cane if I can meet one Suitable. I wish to hear that the Things I sent for you and my Aunt proved Satisfactory. I imagine many of my Letters have Reached you before this, and long to hear from you on the Subject of my Tarry here.

"We have no News. Things seem very quiet. The King is very popular and much Beloved. I hear he has sent a Message to the House desiring he may be Enabled

to Reimburse the Colonies the Expence of Raising and Cloathing the Troops.

"As I had but one hour's Notice of this Ship's Sailing, and must beg your Excuse for the ill Connection of my Letter, I shall write you very particular by Capt Ochterlony who goes for York next week.

"The former part of my Letter was wrote some Time ago, but the latter in great haste, as the Vessel was under sail."

The winter was passing into spring, and the lonely couple on Beacon Hill were pining for Johnny, as the uncle familiarly calls him. He is having struggles in his mind whether to call him home or allow him time to see more of Great Britain. In one of his letters he writes: —

"As to your going to Scotland, use your own Prudence. I want you much if it can be done without loss of time & without great expence. I fear aunt and I am much concerned for you! we are sorry to hear that you have been Confined. she longs to have you at home & so do I, and Indeed I want you much." [1]

It was the 11th of July, however, before the following letter promised his departure: —

"Honored Sir,

"I have not Time as I am Engag'd in preparing for my Voyage to write a long Letter, and this is a saving way, that I can only Acquaint you I long since Agreed with Captain Jacobson for a passage, and Expected by this to have been half way to Boston, but unexpected Detentions have Arisen, both with Respect to want of Goods

[1] From Manuscript Letter Book in the possession of the New England Historic and Genealogical Society.

and Convoy, however, can now say I am in great hopes we shall soon sail, she falls down the river on Tuesday, and I shall set out for Portsmouth by Land on Thursday, and if we are not Detained there in waiting for Convoy, shall in a Week be on our Passage, which in Compliance with your orders, I am very earnest for, and my assiduous Endeavours have not been wanting to get a Passage sooner, but hope all's for the best. The Difficulty of Transporting Baggage from hence to Falmouth prevented my going in the Packett to York.

"You will please to present my most Dutifull Regards to my Dear Aunt Mrs. Hinchman, and Respectfull Compliments to all my Friends, with whom I hope to be soon.

"My Earnest wishes for your Health and Happiness, Concludes me in great haste, with the utmost Gratitude, Honored Sir, Your most obliged and most Dutifull Nephew.

"My Things are all going on board on Monday." [1]

It was at first expected that the coronation would take place in April, of which Hancock wrote, "It is the grandest sight I shall ever meet with." But it was postponed until after the king's marriage to Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, whose arrival stirred the curiosity of all London on the 7th of September.[2] A fortnight later the whole city was

[1] "Mass. Hist. Soc. Proceedings," XLIII, 200.

[2] The law of the crown naturalizing a foreign princess married to the King, her jointures and house of residence is stated in the "Grenville Correspondence," II, 400. As to the question about the king's preference for another woman, see the "Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox," 2 vols., *passim*. Walpole's quill anticipated the fountain pen in its flow of court gossip for the delectation of the Earl of Stratford, Hon. Henry Seymour, Sir Horace Mann, and others. See "Walpole's Letters," p. 771, *et seq.*

agog over the coronation procession, to see which £2,400 was paid for a platform outside the Abbey, and more inside, while the throngs in the street were gaping at the new coach costing £8,000, gorgeous with tritons and palm trees. They were not so much concerned with appointments to this office and that, as that Mr. Grenville, Secretary of State, and Lord Halifax of the Admiralty had exchanged places; that Fox was technically leader of the House of Commons for the king, and Pitt, ousted by the favorite Bute's influence from the Secretaryship of State was the tribune of the people in the House and chief orator of the nation. The mob, sometimes called the Third House of Parliament, cared less for the disputes of Lords Rockingham, Pembroke, and Holderness than to see the three Cherokee chiefs from South Carolina, on a vacation trip to London, a sight that was not unfamiliar to a New Englander, except in the pattern of their war-paint. Nor would the tax-paying traders of the city bewail the peace with Spain so much as Pitt, whose determination to weaken Bourbon hopes and to strengthen England was upset, to the later sorrow of king and minister. The people could not see beyond increased tax rates the greater glory. Much more evident to them was the temper of the greatest mob that London had seen for forty years when a copy of the scurrilous John Wilkes's "North Briton" was ordered to be burnt by the hangman, because it had

accused the king of falsehood; with which charge mud-slingers had unseemly sympathy; also people as high up as the mayor and magistrates of the city, so unpopular had the Bute ministry become.[1] Wilkes, too, failed to reap the reward of his services in reformatory directions through the folly of writing his "Essay on Woman," which would have been the scandal of the town, as it was of Parliament, if its dozen copies had not been suppressed and the author disgraced. There were lesser subjects of gossip that interested the newsmongering court and seeped down through several layers of the society which then existed, to explode finally in effigy, bonfire, and riot when the lowest stratum was reached.

For an educated and observing man from the principal town of New England one object of interest would be the statesman to whom more than any other was due the honor of England's unexampled prosperity. William Pitt, before he became Earl of Chatham, towered above lords and lordlings, politicians and courtiers, and the Georges themselves, with all the stage company which acted the drama of which he alone was protagonist. Educated in the classic methods that marked the revival of oratory, he entered Parliament at the age of twenty-six. Within a year he was recognized

[1] For an account of the Forty-fifth Number of the "North Briton" see Walpole's "Memoirs of George Third's Reign," chapter XIX.

as the champion of the middle classes now rising into importance. With matchless eloquence he opposed the Hanoverian policy of George the Second and afterwards the entire ministry, despite which the king was compelled, after trying others, to transfer the government to him as the ablest man in the realm. The Great Commoner became Prime Minister in 1756. Unseated within a year, and recalled by the people's demand, he began a career which raised England from its insular limitations and the brink of ruin to supremacy among the nations. In Europe, Asia, Africa, and America victory followed victory over France, the ubiquitous foe, and the nation was in sight of the mountain-top of military glory. Then the jealousy, obstinacy, and folly of the king and his minister Bute let the triumphal car go backward with consequent losses to the new empire, of which the American colonies were the first.

It was a piece of the good fortune that commonly attended John Hancock that he should be in London during the apical year of Pitt's ascendency. Associating with the tradesmen of the city, he heard their praises of the man who was lifting them into new and unwonted importance. He would have been the dullard that he was not if he did not hear the first and greatest orator of an eloquent group in some of his celebrated speeches, like that one on the excise bill with its defence of the poor man's house as his castle, which the storm might enter but not

the king himself, unbidden. From this attempt of Bute's to tax the people of England, against which Pitt was arguing, it was but a step to the proposal to make the colonies help pay the cost of all the new possessions. British merchants who had urged Pitt to take double the loans he asked refused his successor their contributions. If they had any sympathy with taxing Americans they did not show it by willingness to be taxed themselves, nor could they expect fellow-subjects three thousand miles away to surpass themselves in loyalty to a government that had weakly let its grand opportunity slip away. Nor could some of its statesmen blame Americans later for opinions rife among the people of England.[1]

In the absence of any written record of what young Hancock saw beyond the king and court — at which there is a tradition that he was presented, and that he received a snuff-box from his majesty — it is fair to suppose that there were few events of importance in the year of his stay in which he had not sufficient interest to go as far out of his way to observe as the average Londoner.[2] Moreover, there were questions intimately affecting the commercial relations between two countries about which

[1] Other defenders of the colonists were Burke, Fox, Pownall, Rose Fuller, Admiral Byng, and some of less note.

[2] In the book world "Tristam Shandy," published in April and commended by Bishop Warburton, was the talk of the town in 1760. The first of "Ossian's Poems" were issued in July of that year.

he was sent abroad to inform himself for the benefit of the firm of which he was to become a member on his return. And although his loyalty might be strengthened rather than diminished by his residence in the capital, he would discover a spirit of free criticism there which might surprise the citizens of provincial Boston, and encourage their protests against taxation and make less obsequious their professions of devotion. At all events he must have had an inside view of the situation before he sailed for home — which may help explain what has seemed to some an unaccountable conversion on his part from sentiments that prevailed among the aristocracy of Boston for the next ten years. At least he could not have come home with unbounded confidence in the policy of George the Third and his advisers.[1] Nor had his stay in London diminished his regard for the contrasting character of his native country. In a letter to his step-father he wrote in the spring of 1761 : —

"I shall with satisfaction bid adieu to this grand place with all its pleasurable enjoyments and tempting scenes for more substantial pleasure which I promise myself in the enjoyment of my friends in America."

[1] The inherited impression regarding George III, gathered from ballads, revolutionary documents, and early histories, will be modified by such recent historical works as Rose's "William Pitt and National Revival," Fortescue's "British Statesmen of the Great War," Trevelyan's "George III and Charles Fox," in which the King's faults and his virtues are sanely dealt with.

CHAPTER VI

BACK TO BOSTON

Before the 17th of October, 1761, Hancock had returned to his home and uncle, as mentioned in a note of the latter of the above date written to Jonathan Barnard of London, one of his agents and a governor of the Magdalen Charity. It gives a hint of the writer's benevolence and of the reading which interested a Boston merchant at that time.

"Dear Sir: At my Return from Church, I found on the Table the Rev'd Mr. Dodd's Excellent Sermon, preached at the Anniversary Meeting of the Governors of the Magdalen Charity, in March last, Which my Nephew had Just Receiv'd. I read it with great pleasure. . . . and Desire that you will please to pay out of the first money you may Receive from me, Seventy Guineas, my subscription to the Magdalen Charity & charge to my Account."

The gift shows the relationship which a large-minded merchant recognized as existing between loyal colonists and the home city, as it was still considered by subjects of the crown. Their charities were nearer than those in the far East, and a worthy cause in London appealed to them with the interest of home missions.

One year from the first of January following his

return the nephew was admitted to copartnership with his uncle. Notice of this transaction was sent to his British agents in the letter of the same day.

"Boston, January 1st, 1763.

[1] "Gent'n: I am to acquaint you that I have at last Got my affairs into such a Scituation, as that I have this Day Taken my Nephew Mr. John Hancock, into Partnership with me, having had long Experience of his Uprightness & great Abilities for Business, as that I can heartily Recommend him to Your Friendship and Correspondence, which wish may be long & happy. . . . Goods I have wrote for, be Charged to Thomas Hancock & Company. . . .

"I wish You the Compliments of the Season, & am with much Respect

"Your most Obed't Serv't

"Thomas Hancock."[1]

It is desirable to observe the commercial and political conditions which prevailed when the junior member found himself in the new and responsible position of partner in a firm of which a large warehouse and several smaller stores were the signs on land, and half a dozen ships on the sea. Restricted by British enactments from manufacturing, and their farming unprofitable, enterprising New Englanders resorted to trade in fish, fur, lumber, oil, and rum, with an incidental carrying-business that made the successful rich according to the standards of the period. Letters to London agents in 1763 reveal particulars of the

[1] Facsimile in A. E. Brown's "John Hancock, His [Letter] Book," p. 14.

Hancocks' commercial affairs, as when on May 6 they write: —

"We desire you will please ship us Fifteen or Twenty Tons of best Petersburg Brack Hemp. This we want for whale Warps & must be of the very best quality."

On June 7 their agency in building a small vessel for the London trade is seen: —

"To be a ship of 160 Tons & think to call her the 'Boston Packett,' to be Launched by the middle of September, every thing to be done in the best manner. . . . A prime going ship, handsome and to carry well, plain but neat for the London trade."

With the primeval forests not far away it seems strange that the Hancocks imported sea coal from England, but its flame was considered a luxury in fashionable houses, although the firm expresses regret to Mr. Benj. Birkbeck that "Coals fetch no better price, the town being well supplied." To London they soon after send "119 casks of sperm oil, 172 of whale oil, white and sweet, far preferable to what is commonly at your market, and you may recommend it as such. The cost is £1436. 14. 4 lawful money."

Cargoes were mixed then as now, and with orders for coals, pork, and butter went this: —

"Our J. H. asks the favor that Mr. Harrison will please get made and send him 1 neatt Bag wig & 1 neatt Bob wig. Fashionable & of a light color. . . . The cost of them he will charge in his little acc'tt with J. H."

This is only a fraction of the entire outfit of nephew John, who was probably the best dressed

young man in Boston. His taste was correct, his judgment of quality unsurpassed, and his knowledge of fashions in London aided by recent residence there. A gold-laced coat of broadcloth, red, blue, or violet, a white satin waist-coat, embroidered; velvet breeches, green, lilac, blue or some other harmonious color; white silk stockings, and shoes flashing with buckles of silver or gold; linen trimmed with lace, made the prosperous young merchant outshine the more dignified but equally rich costume of his opulent senior, and helped to illumine the streets of Boston in an age which was putting off the sombre tints of the Puritan period.

Other luxuries are disclosed in lading bills and orders, as in July, 1764: "Please send an Eider down Quilt, a good one, about 9 or 10 guineas value, as it is for our T. H.'s own use in the Gout. . . . and Ten Groce of best Quart Champaigne Bottles, for our own use." The connection between these articles is close and logical; for it was not the first order of champagne and kindred spirits, and explains an event which followed in less than a month when Thomas Hancock, on August 1, 1764, died of apoplexy, leaving £10,000, his mansion and upland acres to his widow, and to his nephew his warehouses, ships, and the residue of his estate.[1]

[1] The voluminous will of Thomas Hancock, dated March 5, 1763, giving "all the Residue of my whole Estate real, personal, or mixed to my nephew John Hancock to dispose of as he thinks proper," etc., is the "Chamberlain MS.," No. 233, Boston Public Library.

It remained only to order a funeral in keeping with his commercial consequence and his social position. His escutcheon was displayed over the balconied entrance to his house, the rooms were darkened, mourning gloves and rings were distributed, the deceased was eulogized, and the procession honored by fellow dignitaries in the town and province. A distinguished citizen, successful, benevolent, and respected had departed; but his wisdom had provided for the continuance of his business, and that the stately home should remain in the family. The widow was still its mistress, a woman with clear notions of what belonged to her condition and place, with a distinct matrimonial purpose for her desirable nephew amidst the allurements and schemes of the large circle in which he was a most conspicuous and available person.

At present, however, his business affairs were uppermost. Values amounting to seventy thousand pounds sterling had been left him with the responsibility of an extensive import and export trade at a time when embarrassments were multiplying.[1] He addressed himself at once to its details, writing his London agents within a fortnight that he

[1] "Hancock was made neither giddy, arrogant, nor profligate by his inheritance, but continued in regularity, industry, and moderation. Great numbers of people received employment at his hands, and in all his commercial transactions he exhibited a fair and liberal character. He had a knowledge of business, facility in despatching it, and a ready insight into the characters of men." — Tudor's "Life of Otis," pp. 262, 267.

proposes "to carry on the business, as with my late uncle, by myself, of which I shall write you more hereafter," notifying them at the same time of a shipment of potashes, enclosing a custom-house certificate of several cargoes of oil and whalebone, congratulating himself that he can have what oil he pleases of the best men in Nantucket, and that the plan sundry parties had of engrossing the whole oil trade would not be effectual, since he had determined to increase rather than lessen his concern in it, "which of course takes from the other Channell and is very discouraging to Mr. R——, but he knows my mind."

Substituting whale oil for petroleum, there is a suggestive anticipation of large transactions and a control of the market which took place a century and a quarter later; and a reminder also that there was a kingly freedom in orthography in a day when every one did what was right and convenient in his own eyes in writing; also in the arbitrary use of capitals a hundred years before Thomas Carlyle. All this was permissible in a gentleman who was beginning to be called King Hancock, as his grandfather was called Bishop. Sometimes he falls into another royal habit of employing the plural We: "We shall be glad You will be Explicit in Your opinion respecting Oyl & whether You would chuse a Concern in more than what will load the Ship and Brig." In the complicated methods of exchange by way of London he did

an extensive banking business, drawing upon his agents in favor of names then and now prominent in Boston affairs, — Amory, Abbott, Eliot, Gray, Appleton, and others.

He does not hesitate to call his agents to account when they neglect his interests, writing to Barnard and Harrison of Size Lane: —

"I was greatly disappointed in not having all the things wrote for. I beg you would at all times be careful to send my Goods at the first opp'y, as it makes great odds in the sale, I am at a Loss to account why my Hemp & Beer & many other things should be omitted in my own ship & others have the preference, which is certainly now the case & I must insist upon it that in the future none of my goods be turned aside for any others. You may have reasons for this, but to me it appears pretty extraordinary."

He is equally insistent with debtors at home, as in this advertisement: —

"Store No. 4, at east end of Faneuil Hall Market, a general assortment of English and East India Goods, also choice Newcastle Coals, and Irish Butter, cheap for Cash. Said Hancock desires those persons who are still indebted to the estate of the late Thomas Hancock, Esq., deceased, to be speedy in paying their respective balances to prevent trouble." [1]

When John Hancock reached home in 1761 he found that colonial sentiment had changed in his absence. The policy of the new king had been

[1] "On land reclaimed from the dock, and near the head of the present South Market Street, John Hancock kept store, and by advertisement called upon debtors to the estate of his late uncle, the Hon. Thomas Hancock, to make payment." — Justin Winsor's "Memorial History of Boston," Introduction to Vol. II, p. xx.

closely watched, and it was beginning to show results among people who had been encouraged to think and act for themselves far more than native Englishmen. Dissenters and radicals had been driven and baited to these shores, or cast out like weeds only to take root in virgin soil. Great laxity was shown by the crown, and many privileges were granted to the Ishmaelites in the wilderness. When a time came to govern them and profit by them they displayed the unruly temper of children that have been allowed to run wild. The first show of restraint stirred a resentful spirit of independence. It had been the fortune of Hancock in London to observe the sudden and serious turning of attention by the British ministry to their prosperous dependencies here when it was proposed to draw upon them for the expense of repulsing their French neighbors along the Canadian border. Upon the face of it taxing the provinces seemed nothing more than a fair demand for benefits secured at great cost. In England, and to some in America, refusal appeared like repudiation. But provincials had their heads upon the future rather than the past, and the colonies were already republics so far as proverbial ingratitude could make them, — at least this was sufficient to promise little toward reducing the national debt, a part of which had been incurred in the colonies' behalf. Moreover, just as the king was ready to emphasize their membership in the new empire they had

begun to think about the possibility of a separate nationality of their own.[1] It needed only an acid to precipitate what was held in unseen solution, and to make men speak out what was in their minds.

This occurred when Parliament resolved upon imposing "certain stamp duties" in March, 1764. It was a year later when Grenville secured the passage of the act; but the storm of wrath that then burst had been gathering in twelve months of anticipation. It was not considered a tyrannical measure in England, any more than the receipt of a son's wages during his minority. But the carrying trade of Massachusetts in particular had been interfered with for years, incidentally making traders smugglers. The Stamp Act could not be so easily evaded as trade restrictions had been. Therefore the dispute was shifted to the claim that Parliament had no right to tax a people who were not represented in that legislative body by persons elected by the taxed. This was a new doctrine in a country where a county or a borough might be represented by a non-resident, appointed perhaps by a single land-owner. Another method had grown up here, where all freemen were repre-

[1] As early as 1643 the New England Confederation must have suggested to the colonists the possibility of a future union, a century and a quarter before it became a reality. Penn's scheme of a Biennial Congress followed in 1690, and Davenant's, Coxe's, and Franklin's proposals and plans were successive expressions of the same thought of association.

sented in assembly by the choice of the majority, and they demanded that the traditions of the mother country be displaced by the new order, in their case at least. Furthermore they insisted that the Colonial Assembly, and not Parliament, should govern them. On these terms they were willing to preserve a federal union with Great Britain. Each party insisted on its view of these two questions, from the standpoint of different traditions, and with varying opinions as to how far the colonist was a British subject in every respect like the Englishman at home.

Thus as early as 1763 provincials of advanced views began to entertain ambitious thoughts, and to struggle between loyalty to the crown and the desire for independence. If they had a wild dream of armed resistance to British demands so early, they became confident when they remembered what the regulars had taught them in the French and Indian war, with contemptuous airs of superiority, and that provincial troops did yeoman service then, even showing red-coats a trick or two, as at Braddock's defeat. With France no longer hanging like a menacing cloud upon the northwestern border, Americans could face about toward the sea if hostile ships should appear. It was well known that England had regarded the French in Canada as a restrictive power in keeping the expanding colonies from too rapid growth, and as a salutary check upon their ambitions.

With this barrier removed, apprehensions of colonial expansion were renewed in England. As far back as 1748 a traveller was told that the colonists had increased so much in numbers and riches that in thirty or forty years they would be able to form a state by themselves entirely independent of the mother country.

The greatest obstacle to this, inspiring hope in the British Government and in loyal hearts here, was the antagonism between the twelve independencies along the coast. They were isolated from one another by distance, difficulty of communication, differences in religion and politics, and by the prejudice and hatred which naturally followed. Even so near neighbors as Massachusetts and Rhode Island were as Philistia and Edom to each other. The general admission of estrangement, and spasmodic movements toward some sort of alliance, from the New England Confederation of 1643 onward for a hundred years to the Albany Convention of 1754, had ended in nothing beyond a feeble groping toward crystallization, with no organic growth toward unity. Still, the desirability of federation was a growing thought in some minds. A pressure from outside was needed, stronger than internal jealousies, dissensions, and repugnancies, to weld the provinces into unity. When this came with the third George's coërcive demand for tribute, the idea of drawing together for its refusal gained converts every day.

These topics of union for independence Hancock had heard mentioned before he went to London, but only by such radicals as John Adams, the school teacher who had declared in 1755 that "the only way to keep us from setting up for ourselves is to disunite us." French writers for thirty years had been predicting the loss to Britain of her colonies; and some Americans were not unwilling to accept their prophecies and to note the signs that were to precede the event, particularly the conquest of Canada. But to speak openly of separation was, before 1760, like talking of secession before 1860.

As for English prophecy, Mr. Pratt, afterward Lord Camden, is reported to have said in conversation with Franklin in 1759: "For all that you Americans say of your loyalty, I know you will one day throw off your dependence upon this country, and, notwithstanding your boasted affection for it, will set up for independence." George Chalmers, author of the "Political Annals of the United Colonies," intimated that there were "most satisfactory proofs, from 1688, of the settled purpose of the colonies to acquire independence." It might be answered that if such predictions were common in England, Americans would have been encouraged to entertain thoughts of separation earlier than they did to any extent. On the other hand, it is difficult to credit Franklin's reply to Lord Chatham as late as August, 1774, that he "never had heard from any person, drunk

or sober, the least expression of a wish for a separation or hint that it would be advantageous to America." Perhaps his long residence abroad did not permit him to hear mutterings along the coast from Maine to Georgia. Yet a similar dullness of hearing seems to have affected John Adams, Jay, Madison, Jefferson, and Washington, who all made similar avowals just before the war broke out. And Americans generally were careful to maintain that concessions from the crown were what was demanded and desired, not independence; which on this supposition was an indirect sequence of the strife, not its purpose, as in the instance of slave emancipation ninety years later.

The apparent inconsistency may be explained by the colonists' desire not to fail in every expression of loyalty, while acting with the independence in which they had been allowed to grow up. Exasperated by this discarding of authority, as in the matter of its trade laws, the mother country would be provoked to take the initiative by sending troops, and thus incur the blame of beginning the quarrel. It does not appear that the British government or people placed much value on professions of loyalty from the colonies; and these in turn had no difficulty in interpreting replies that were sent back undisguised by any circumlocutions of diplomacy.

CHAPTER VII

GROWTH OF HANCOCK'S PATRIOTISM

For three years after his return from London Hancock appears to have been chiefly concerned with the commercial affairs of the firm. His uncle as the head of it naturally overshadowed him, and being a staunch loyalist would not encourage radical sentiments in the junior partner. When restraint was removed by death and the nephew was his own man, indications begin to appear of departure from the traditions of the family, which must have given uneasiness to the widow in her reminiscent life at the mansion. He had been conducting business alone for six months when, in the midst of correspondence with his London agents, he gave the first intimation of disquiet at the depression which followed the burdensome laws of trade:—

"Times are very precarious here; you must make the most of your remittances as Money is Extremely Scarce & trade very dull. If we are not relieved at home [England] we must live upon our own produce and manufactures. We are terribly burthen'd, our Trade will decay, we are really worth a Saving." [1]

[1] For the entire letter of February 7, 1765, with facsimile of a part of it, and the following extracts in this chapter see "His Letter Book," pp. 63 ff.

Three months later, March 22, 1765, the Stamp Act was passed, but the tidings had not reached Boston when he wrote early in April: —

"I hear the stamp act is like to take place, it is very cruel, we were before much burthened, we shall not be able much longer to support trade, and in the end Great Britain must feel the ill effects of it. I wonder the merchants & friends to America don't make some stir for us."

He could not yet know that Barré and Conway enlivened a languid debate on March 22 by defending the colonists' position and their right of petition. On May 13, after news of the passage of the Stamp Act had arrived, he wrote: —

"I am heartily sorry for the great Burthen laid upon us, we are not able to bear all things, but must submit to higher powers, these taxes will greatly affect us, our Trade will be ruined, and as it is, it's very dull."

A point to be noticed in this sentence is the apparent submission to "higher powers." Unless this sentiment was penned for effect upon London agents, Hancock had not become advanced in outspoken opposition to the government up to this time. Such antagonism was growing fast in the town and doubtless in his own mind; but his affairs were not in a condition to warrant a break with English factors by expressing more than a mild regret at the course of events, accompanied by commendation for their choice of "Silk Cloths" for himself and an order for

"two pipes of the very best Madeira for my own Table.

I don't stand at any price, let it be good, I like a rich wine. You will use the same judgment in the choice of it as for my late uncle who had a high opinion of your Fidelity."

By the 22d of August he is aroused to a stronger protest which he sent by his new sloop "Liberty" on its first voyage.

"I refer you to the Newspapers for an account of the proceedings here by which you will see the General dissatisfaction here on account of the Stamp Act, which I pray may never be carried into Execution, it is a Cruel hardship upon us & unless we are Redressed we must be Ruined, our Stamp officer has resigned.[1] I hope the same Spirit will prevail throughout the whole Continent. do Exert yourselves for us and promote our Interest with the Body of Merchants the fatal Effects of these Grievances you will feel very Sensibly; our Trade must decay & indeed already is very indifferent. I can't therefore but hope that we shall be considered, & that some will rise up to exert themselves for us we are worth saving but unless speedily relieved we shall be past remedy. Do think of us."

When the stamps arrived, within a month after this letter, he wrote again in answer to one which had come over in the same ship with

"the most disagreeable Commodity (say Stamps) that were ever imported into this Country, and what if carry'd into Execution will entirely Stagnate Trade here, for it is universally determined here never to submit to it, . . . & nothing but the repeal of the act will righten, the Consequence of its taking place will be bad, & I believe I may say more fatal to you than to us. For God's sake use your Interest to relieve us. I dread the Event."

[1] For the text of the Stamp Act see MacDonald's "Select Charters," p. 282.

Eighteen days before, he had attended a town-meeting in Faneuil Hall, and as a selectman had been appointed one of a committee to "instruct the town's representatives in General Assembly as to their Conduct at this very alarming Crisis." And a fortnight after, when a vacancy in the list of representatives was to be filled, he received several votes; but Sam Adams was elected. His turn came later.

There had been riots in August with hanging and burning the stamp officer's effigy and attacking the acting governor's house; but as a town Boston recorded its disapproval of such demonstrations. Hancock would go with the town as one of its officers; but in the quiet of his office he wrote on October 14 to the London house in a long letter words which indicate his growing patriotism: —

"I now tell you, and you will find it come to pass, that the people of this Country will never Suffer themselves to be made slaves of by a Submission to that D——d act. But I shall now open to you my own Determinations. . . . a thousand Guineas would be no Temptation to me to be the first that should apply for a stamp. . . . Under this additional Burthen of the Stamp Act I cannot carry on business to any profit and we were before Cramp'd in our Trade & sufficiently Burthen'd, that any farther Taxes must Ruin us. . . . There is not cash enough here to support it. . . . I have a right to the Libertys & Privileges of the English Constitution, & I as an Englishman will enjoy them. . . ."

In the transition from one nationality to an-

other the home country, laws, and traditions were still uppermost in the upper-class American's mind ten years before the revolt, and for several years after, according to the progress independency was making in different minds. When, in October, 1765, the deputies of nine colonies assembled in New York their appeal as Americans was to the natural rights of Englishmen, ending in a declaration of those rights and a statement of grievances, chiefly the taxation of colonists who could not be represented in the House of Commons. A petition was sent asking that the tax laws be repealed, but with no mention of intended separation.[1]

It was the middle of January, 1766, before American affairs came up in Parliament. The king was surprised and grieved, provoked and humiliated, he said, by colonial disaffection. He feared where it would end, and how it would be dealt with in Parliament. Parties differed there, and the nation was divided. Repeal of the Stamp Act was urged by Whigs. Tories opposed and the aristocracy of the country backed them, while the manufacturing and commercial towns saw

[1] "The principle of no taxation without representation could not be maintained by any statesman not prepared for a radical reform of the British representative system." — "Cambridge Modern History," VI, 433. "The house [of Commons] is not the representative of the people of Great Britain, but of nominal boroughs, ruined towns, noble families, wealthy individuals, and foreign potentates." — William Pitt in "Life" by J. Holland Rose, I, 107, note.

repudiation and bankruptcy ahead. Pitt rested his plea for Americans on the different conditions of life in a new land; Mansfield cited British precedent to answer their demand for representation, eight millions of Englishmen out of nine having no votes for their representatives, and yet were taxed. So the debate went on between two parties there as here. Franklin's replies at his examination before the Commons' Committee on the 13th of February helped to clear up misunderstanding of the American position, and a week later leave was given to bring in a bill for the Repeal of the Stamp Act. By March 17, it had passed both Houses, but with the fatal rider that the "King and Parliament have power to make laws for the colonies and people of America, and that any proceedings denying such power are utterly null and void."[1]

The provinces were so thankful for the repeal of the Stamp Act that they did not pay much attention to the claim of authority to pass other acts. The lad who has escaped punishment does not stay to argue with his father about paternal rights, but hurries off about his enterprises. So did the people of Boston. They were wildly elated. Cannon boomed, flags were thrown to the breeze, music went up and down the streets. John Hancock set out one of those two pipes of Madeira that

[1] John Hancock's brigantine "Harrison," Shuabel Coffin, master, brought the news of the repeal of the Stamp Act.

he had ordered for his own use in front of his house for the cheering crowd, — who remembered him at the May election for representatives. Within the mansion the aristocrats of the town helped themselves to Burgundy and other wines at his sideboard and drank healths to a reforming Parliament. Even the royal governor, Sir Francis Bernard, joined in the general rejoicing which drowned party animosities for a day.[1]

In the succeeding months of gratulation and loyalty throughout the colonies threatening weather seemed to be clearing and might have passed away if the billeting of troops and demands for an unusual provision for them had not renewed the irritation; which soon brought out a refusal by the New York Assembly and its own suspension in consequence. Massachusetts also asked its governor why he had provided British soldiers at the Castle with fire and candles at the people's expense; and at first the Province objected to compensate for losses through mob violence in the Stamp Act riots, but did so later. Talk of separation by extremists was less frequent and comparative content prevailed.

Unfortunately England could not acquiesce in the general congratulation, nor give up hopes of revenue from the colonies. Townshend, chancellor of the exchequer, was confident that he could devise

[1] For what could be done in the line of pyrotechnic display in 1766 see M. A. De Wolfe Howe's "Boston Common," p. 35.

a method to secure contributions to the treasury, and on the strength of this anticipation the land tax in England was reduced a shilling to the pound. To balance this a duty was laid on glass, red and white lead, paper, and tea imported by Americans; the revenue to be used in giving the crown complete control of colonial governors and judges, by paying their salaries instead of letting them be amenable to the provinces and receiving their salaries from them.

Discontent was rife once more. Joseph Hawley of Northampton, Massachusetts, took one step beyond everybody else when he declared, that Parliament had no right to legislate at all for the colonies without their chosen deputies as members of it.[1] The whole country was stirred to protest again, but with a sobriety of speech that was more ominous than the former ebullition of riots. The Boston town-meeting renewed a non-importation agreement on October 28, 1767, and two months later sent a letter to the British ministry, and others to friendly statesmen, with a petition to the king. While their right hands handed over these loyal messages, their left hands passed out a circular letter to other colonial legislatures, urging union and harmony in view of what might be coming. Eight colonies responded, and Virginia issued a

[1] In Tudor's "Life of Otis" some account is given of this reserved man who was a power behind noisier patriots. He refused to hold any office because the desire for it had been imputed as the reason of revolutionary acts.

similar letter of its own. Officers of the crown here, unable to enforce revenue laws, declared that Americans were bent on independence despite their professions of loyalty. Lord Hillsborough, Secretary of State, sent a circular to other colonies urging them to treat the Massachusetts letter with contempt, and commanded the Massachusetts legislature to approve of its own action. To which James Otis replied, "Let Britain rescind her own measures or the colonies are lost to her forever:" and other colonies endorsed Massachusetts. They were getting together for serious business. England also was getting ready.

Meantime John Hancock's attention was diverted to the promise of his deceased uncle to give books to the value of five hundred pounds sterling to Harvard College, to which he also added a large collection in his own name. Together they numbered 1,098½ volumes. His letter ordering the books is characteristic of a book-lover and shrewd buyer:—

"It is some time since I heard from you with the Magazines &c. w'ch Beg in future you will please be Regular in sending. . . . I now inclose you a large Inv° of Books, which I desire you will please to send me, pack'd in the best manner and marked I. H. I must Recommend to you to be very carefull in the collect of these Books, that they may be the best Editions & well Bound, & that you be particular in sending every Book mentioned, if to be had at any price, that each and every book be neatly Lettered & as there are several Pamphlets, that you will be Mindful to Bind as

many together as will make a neat volume & let them all be sent in that way. Lettering on the Back, that they may be known. Upon the whole, I Recommend to you that the whole of these Books be very neat, well chosen, & Charged at the Lowest prices, as the whole of these Books are a present from me to our College Library in Cambridge."

The rest of the letter relates to shipment and terms of payment. It is to be presumed that as he was fulfilling a request of his uncle, which he might have failed to do without prosecution, and also added to the gift himself, he did not think it necessary to specify to the London bookseller that one half of the donation was Thomas Hancock's. He need not, however, have been particular to say, "the whole of these Books are a present from me." They understood at Harvard the share due to each donor, and acknowledged the same on Commencement Day, July 15, 1767. Moreover, something ought to be forgiven to the nephew who supplemented his uncle's endowment of a Hebrew professorship, and a gift of theological books, with Spenser, Chaucer, Pope, Dryden, and Gay, although Voltaire and Rabelais must have been regarded with suspicion by the faculty. Hollis's donation of Milton, Shakespeare, La Fontaine, and Boccaccio was similarly a departure from what had been regarded as appropriate reading for students in the Puritan age.[1]

[1] The inventory of the books shipped by Thos. Longman on the "Boston Packet" from London March 21, 1766, "to the account and Risque of John Hancock, Esqr. Merchant in Boston," contains about five hundred titles, at a cost of £516. 16. 13¾." "Chamberlain Mss." Boston Public Library.

It may not be amiss to enumerate the list of books in Hancock's own library as finally inventoried, and copied in the "Historical Magazine" for May, 1860. It is a fair collection of volumes for the time and fuller than most libraries of the day, about one hundred and fifty numbers in all.

Postlethwaite's Dictionary of Trade and Commerce; 2 vols., folio. Dart's History and Antiquities of the Abbey Church of St. Peter's; 2 vols., folio. Chamber's Dictionary: 2 vols., folio. Willard's Divinity; folio. Flavel's Works; folio. Bacon's Philosophy. Hollis's Memoirs; quarto. Prussian Evolutions. Carter's Epictetus. Newton's Milton; 3 vols. Role's Conduct. Universal History; 51 vols. Memoirs of Marlborough. Magdalen Charities. Hanway's Reflections on Life and Religion. Varro's Husbandry. Locke on the Understanding. Beccaria on Crimes. Annals of the Netherlands. Constitution of the United States. Zimmerman on Pride. Dickinson's Political Essays. Cato's Letters; 4 vols. Field's Engineer. Adams's Defence of the Constitution; 3 vols. Ramsay's History of the United States. Belknap's New Hampshire. Erkhard's Gazetteer, or the Newsman's interpreter. Nature Displayed, or Spectacle de la Nature; 7 vols. Salmon's Short View. Clarendon's Rebellion. British Registers. Whitelock's Historical Memoirs. Age of Louis XIV. British Customs. England's Reformation. Horneck's Great Law of Consideration. Hervey's Meditations. Chauncy's Thoughts on Religion. Virgil. Horace and Tully. Estimate of Manners. Greek Homer. Cæsar and Juvenal. Tattler and Guardian. Shakespeare and Spectator. Female Spectator. Pamela. Mahew's Sermons. Sir Charles Grandison. Faith and Practice; 2 vols. Collin's Rambler. Gay. Tom Jones. Pope. Dryden. Glover's Leonidas. Robertson's Scotland. Military Instructor. Essay on Slavery. Jour-

nal of Congress. Emily Montague. Bibles in various languages. Whole Duty of Man. Archbishop Sharpe's Sermons and Discourses; 7 vols. Watts's Works. Massachusetts Constitution. Adam's Defence, in Dutch. Ladies Library; 3 vols. Irwin's Tracts. Boyer's French Dictionary. Sim's Military Guide. Historical Dictionary. Hewett's Fables. Memoirs of the Plague in London. Mathematical works in French, Latin, Greek, and Dutch.

If Hancock's radical sentiments had been of slower growth than Sam Adams's, they were to have a stimulus which would be likely to ripen them speedily. On June 10, 1768, one of his vessels, a new sloop with the ominous name of "Liberty," arrived in the harbor with wines from Madeira. Custom house officials happened to be displaying one of the intermittent attacks of zeal to which they are subject in all times and places. This particular collector, Thomas Kirk, was so officious about the casks of Madeira that the crew locked him below while the wet goods were swung to the dock and a false entry made, according to an evasive habit which importers had fallen into after the ancient Act of Navigation had become offensive in its recent enforcement. How far the owner of the sloop was responsible for the lawlessness of the crew is a question that could have been answered easier at the time than now. His friend, Captain James Marshall, was not far away, and the office and warehouse certainly were not, and doubtless the owner was not. But the master of a British frigate was impressing American sailors into his

service; one of them had been rescued that very day. It was not a time to observe the revenue laws of Engand more strictly than they had been heeded for many years all along the coast.[1]

When the customs collector was released from the hold he reported the outrage to the commander of the "Romney," a fifty-gun ship that had brought troops to Boston. Hancock's sloop was soon seized for fraudulent entry and moved under the frigate's guns to prevent recapture by amphibious Bostonians. Landsmen joined in a consequent riot to the damage of revenue officers' houses, and the collector's boat, which had figured in the affair of the "Liberty," was taken to the Common and burned, while its owner fled to the "Romney" for protection and thence to Castle William. A town meeting had always been the safety valve of the upper classes when the lower ran riot. One was immediately called, which sent an address to Governor Bernard, its sentiments balancing between professions of loyalty and the spirit of liberty, accompanied by a request to have the frigate removed from the harbor. Bernard replied that it was beyond his authority to order the removal. Hancock was one of a committee which went to see when the governor would receive them,

[1] "The first act of violence was the seizure of John Hancock's sloop Liberty, which was freighted with a cargo of Madeira wine, June 10, 1768." — Guy Carleton Lee's "History of North America," VI, 119. The duty on Madeira was much higher according to its value than on other wines.

but he was at his house in Jamaica Plain, whither a larger delegation proceeded in an imposing line of eleven chaises, to be politely received and get the above unsatisfactory answer from the governor.

As for the case of Hancock and his sloop "Liberty," it was brought into the courts and prosecuted under libels to the amount of 100.000 pounds sterling. John Adams was counsel for the defendant, his main defense being that a law had been broken which Americans had no share in making. The case gave him no end of trouble, and was finally settled by the battle of Lexington, with many other old scores.

Various incidents have been interpreted as marking the initial break of colonists with the authority of the crown, but none are so notable as the restraint of the inspector and the retaliatory taking into custody of Hancock's sloop. Wine had been escorted by a gang of roughs through the town three months before, an occurrence which the revenue officers deemed it prudent not to notice lest the tar-and-feather fate of a Providence collector should befall them. But now the gage had been thrown down in sight of a royal frigate by a Boston merchant, and it had been picked up by the commander. It was not necessary to fire a broadside to announce that a conflict had begun. It must be admitted that John Hancock began it. For good or evil he had that distinction. Sam Adams had plotted and talked and written. James

Otis had waxed eloquent; Joseph Hawley had gone a step further in radical utterances, and Joseph Warren had been a leader in club meetings of patriots; but it fell to John Hancock to commit the overt and conspicuous act which brought about the first clash with the British government that was important enough to deserve the name. In itself the deed was not a noble one, unless as a protest against an unpopular or unjust law which had been often violated, so frequently and boldly that the government was open to the ridicule of the world. It was obliged to maintain its revenue acts or rescind them. Protests against them had availed nothing; accordingly defiance was tried. It was the same course that was pursued in one instance after another until independence was secured; but Hancock, with his customary fortune, headed the list and led the procession. He was not exactly a drum-major, tossing a gilded pikestaff in advance of band and regiment, officers and troops, but he lacked nothing of the foremost place and splendor of the radiant leader who gives the time to a marching host. It will be observed as his story proceeds that he was in the forefront of many movements and at the turning-point in several critical junctures. He was not so often the cause of occurrences as the apparent occasion; which is the most evident token to the multitude of intimate connection with events. In this instance he was not the man to regret that his

ship had been caught between an American dock and a British man-of-war, nor that he had persisted in violating laws which were deemed unjust and were broken in every port. His importance would not be diminished by the confiscation of his sloop — the wines were safe — and he himself was immediately the most conspicuous patriot in the town.

He was also a cloud in the west to the ministry in London when they heard what had happened. They declared once more that "there had been a long-concerted plan to resist the authority of Great Britain,[1] and that the people of Boston had hastened to acts of violence sooner than was intended, and that nothing but immediate exertion of military power could prevent an open revolt of the town." So they ordered two additional regiments to Boston. It certainly looked as if Hancock was to have the honor of precipitating hostilities when in town-meeting James Otis said, pointing to four hundred muskets belonging to the town, "There are your arms; when an attempt is made against your liberties they will be delivered to you:" and the inhabitants then voted to provide themselves further with arms, alleging that "there is an apprehension in the minds of

[1] Later it was openly announced that Hancock and Washington were privy to a conspiracy for burning down London, and that Hancock in a letter written in cipher had prophesied the blowing up of the city. — Trevelyan's "George III. and Charles Fox," I, 253.

many of an approaching war with France"! so shrewdly careful were they to avoid all outward suggestion of disloyalty.

In due season two regiments with artillery arrived from Halifax, and were landed under the protection of eight men-of-war. When they marched to the Common with sixteen rounds of cartridges in their boxes and camped there — also in Faneuil Hall, and the Town House — some Tories would say, catching Dundas' phrase, See what John Hancock and his crew have brought here by running that cargo of wines past the custom house with only partial entry — "five pipes for himself, two for the Treasurer of the Province, and six of good saleable Madeira for our market" — so ran the order to Hill, Lamar, & Bissett. But with the Whigs he was already in greater favor than Sam Adams even, since at the election of 1767 he was reëlected representative to the General Court by a vote of six hundred and eighteen, which was forty-four more than Adams received, and forty-three more than Otis, and sixty-one more than Cushing. If, as his enemies said, he was fond of popularity and courted it, he was eminently successful; and if there was a leader of the populace in the direction they were headed it was the aristocratic Hancock. When the natural antipathy of the class that composed the rank and file of radicals, at this preliminary stage of the Revolution, to the conservative element to which Hancock belonged

is remembered, something more than an overweening thirst for general applause must be taken into account. A hard-headed people saw values beyond the wealth and display which most often antagonize them; nor were their suffrages won by civilities that are apt to be interpreted as patronage. Therefore it will be difficult to attribute Hancock's headship at this period to any causes which do not include a genuine devotion to liberty for the colonies, manifested by personal sacrifices which he was ready to make and did make, as will be seen. For every reason he was a man of the people at a time when they needed a man of position commercially, politically, and socially; but if he had not also had a genuine and devoted patriotism his other accessories would not have satisfied them.[1]

His increasing patriotism and consequent popularity meant a corresponding disfavor with the British government. He loomed large before the ministry when they heard of the "Liberty" affair, and the king was so incensed that he never forgave him. It was suggested in Parliament that the names of the chief agitators be sent to one of the Secretaries of State, and that a statute, long obsolete, be enforced to bring to England subjects accused of treason outside the kingdom. There were Tories in Boston who could furnish rebel lists of

[1] "Our forefathers, at the beginning of the struggle, were glad if they and their cause could even be counted respectable." — Perkins's "France in the American Revolution," p. 64.

varying length, but John Hancock would just then head every one of them, although Sam Adams had the priority when affidavits were sent over to prove him fit to be transported. Possibly Hancock was too important socially and commercially in loyalist circles to be attacked; and moreover he was not so noisy in town-meeting as Adams. But George the Third did not make much distinction between them when he excepted both from a general amnesty.[1] Still, both of them were more reserved than Otis or Hawley in provoking the government by radical speech. With other wise men it was their policy to let Britain become the first offender and to place themselves on the defensive merely. Accordingly they waited a year and a half, while troops idled in the town and the armed fleet swung at anchor in the harbor. Soldiers and sailors, liable to insult and abuse, behaved as well as could be expected, restrained by officers who had their loyalist sympathizers and entertainers in the town in greater numbers than is supposed by those who imagine the struggle to have been between a united America and a solid

[1] Force, "American Archives," Fourth Series, II, 968. The worst that the malignant Tory, "Z. Z." could say of him was that "Sam Adams with his oily tongue had duped a man whose brains were shallow and his pockets deep, and ushered him to the public as a patriot too. He filled his head with importance and emptied his pockets, and as a reward kicked him up the ladder where he now presides over the Twelve United Provinces." — Quoted by Wells, "Life of Samuel Adams," p. 431.

England; whereas there was a division of sentiment in each country. But between the common troops and laborers on the docks, in shipyards, and ropewalks there was always friction, which like flint with steel was likely to strike fire some day.

This happened on the 2d of March, 1770, when the rope-spinners of the North End put up a street fight with the soldiers of the 29th regiment, of which the commander complained to Hutchinson as acting governor. Three days later a crowd which had been called together by a false alarm of fire began pelting a sentinel in front of the Custom House. Calling for help, Captain Preston and a squad of half a dozen soldiers came to his defence. The mob surrounded them flourishing clubs, calling names, and daring the troops to shoot. A soldier, hit with a bludgeon, fired and killed a ringleader, Crispus Attucks, a mulatto. Other soldiers fired, killing three, mortally wounding two, and injuring six. The soldiers were arrested, imprisoned, and acquitted seven months afterward by a Boston jury. But the icy snowballs of a March evening, returned by bullets, opened a series of battles, the next of which was to be five years later.

CHAPTER VIII

ENTRANCE UPON PUBLIC LIFE

THE seizure of his sloop had made an apology, if he needed one, for John Hancock to become active in the liberty party. Even his loyalist neighbors would excuse his attitude. In their hearts they would have held him to be a mean-spirited coward if he had not resented the act, although some would say that the commander of the "Romney" was obliged to maintain the laws; but such defenders did not belong to the princely smugglers down by the wharves. These apologizers more likely were inn-holders who kept taverns frequented by army and navy officers, or lawyers who held briefs for customs officials, or ministers who preached to congregations supposed to be generally loyal, like Church of England people who gave patriots so much trouble, and suffered more as the struggle proceeded and when it ended. However the affair of the wine-laden ship was regarded, with the subsequent action against its owner, he was brought prominently into the controversy that was brewing, and gave advanced leaders a powerful leverage to lift him into preëminence.[1] Two years before

[1] Stark, with Loyalist sympathies, says that the breaking out of the Revolution saved Hancock from financial ruin, his case being

this he had celebrated the repeal of the Stamp Act with hospitable cheer, and voters did not forget it when they chose him one of a committee to thank John Dickinson of Pennsylvania for his "Farmer's Letters," now circulating throughout the colonies. Hancock was in good patriot company, between Samuel Adams and Joseph Warren, the two other members of the committee. Two months afterward came the capture of the "Liberty," which naturally confirmed and strengthened his choice of party and helped his promotion in its ranks. And when in May, 1769, Governor Bernard summoned the Legislature, which had not met for a year, Boston placed Hancock on the list of representatives.[1] The first action of this assembly was to demand the removal of troops from the town. Refusing to do business until this was done, the representatives were sent out to Cambridge, on the pretext that they would there be out of military reach. Soon after, the governor was removed from the trouble he was making, being recalled to court and made Baronet of Nettleham for his consolation.

in the Admiralty Court at the time for damages laid for more than the value of his property. — "Loyalists of Massachusetts," p. 50.

[1] "John Adams, walking with Sam Adams on the Common, looking towards Hancock's house said, 'This town has done a wise thing to-day. They have made that young man's fortune their own.' His prophecy was literally fulfilled, for no man's property was ever more entirely devoted to the public. And his private affairs were left to subalterns to the end of his life." — Tudor's "Life of James Otis," p. 262, note.

Then came the scrimmage by the custom house, an appropriate place, since import and export duties were the chief cause of contention; and the town called the killing of six and the injury of half-a-dozen more a Massacre, commemorating it on every anniversary for thirteen years. Blood was up and the struggle had begun. Another town-meeting was in order, with the consequent committee of seven of the principal citizens, on which John Hancock was placed first and Samuel Adams second. They were to visit the governor and demand that the troops be removed from town, both regiments, only six hundred men in all. A biographer of Adams remarks that "Probably the rich, luxurious chairman [Hancock] did not forget, even on an occasion like this, to set off his fine figure with gay velvet and lace, and a gold headed cane." Even so he was first inside the council chamber at the head of a company which included Henshaw, Phillips, Molineux, Pemberton, and Warren. Of course it was Adams who did the talking, as usual; but Hancock had the honor and the satisfaction of personally conducting the embassy which compelled the governor to send the two obnoxious regiments out to Castle William. He had also the gratification of reporting success to the meeting, which had waited till dark to hear from the committee, and to learn that "the inhabitants expressed their high satisfaction it afforded them," as the record runs. The victory

which the patriot party won had been for the peace of the whole town, and by the effort of the most prominent men in it, peers of Hancock in eminence. Others who had not endorsed their action were profited by it. The tide was turning to the flood. John Hancock had no reason to doubt which was the people's party; that he was in general favor and on the road to honor and usefulness he had abundant evidence. To be a selectman was then a great distinction; to be a representative in the Legislature was a high honor. Frequent choice as presiding officer was another token of popular estimation; and to be chairman of committees, and a leader of deputations was still further proof of public regard. He generally knew what he could do well and what he could not, with one exception which will appear later; but according to his ability he was willing to serve, and what he furnished was no small part of the requisites to success.[1] The Whig party had not enough of such material to outdo the Tories in a direction which is much to some and something to everybody, namely wealth and social standing.

It is rarely, however, that any man's road to pros-

[1] "As a presiding officer he was not surpassed by any person of his time. His voice was powerful, his acquaintance with parliamentary forms accurate; apprehension quick, attentive, impartial, dignified, and he inspired respect and confidence wherever he presided. In private life he commanded the esteem of political opponents, and his beneficence never failed." — Tudor's "Life of James Otis," p. 268.

perity has no turnings, and Hancock's course was not always in the straight line which Sam Adams chose. When the controversy was renewed about convening the General Court at Cambridge in obedience to royal instructions, Adams held that these were a violation of the chartered rights of the Province. Hancock took the side of Hutchinson and the king. Aside from the inconvenience of getting to the academic town and staying there, no greater harm would follow than that of crowding instructors and students out of the "Philosophy Room" which the Legislature honored by its sessions. It was the king's "instructions" that Adams objected to, with Hawley and Bowdoin on his side; while Hancock, Otis, and others of the majority took the view that if the crown wished to adjourn the assembly to the wilds of "Housatonic in the extreme west of the Province" it could do so. It was a bitter pill to Adams that they put him on the committee which took this humble acquiescence to the governor; but he had an opportunity to see how badly matters were going. The removal to Cambridge could not be raised to the dignity of a calamity when there were other differences lying like a cloud-bank on the eastern horizon.

Hancock had been hearing of late considerable talk about being a tool of Adams's. It was a convenient time to show that he had a mind of his own, especially when Otis and the majority were with

him. Hutchinson ungenerously construed his attitude as a defection from the liberty party, in which the governor was followed by later critics;[1] but Adams and Hawley were not the entire band of patriots, — only pioneers blazing the path. When something of more consequence came up Hancock was with them once more. Stephen Higginson, writing for the "Massachusetts Centinel" in the heat of a gubernatorial campaign twenty years after this episode, asserted that radicals had no confidence in his [Hancock's] attachment to the cause, and but for their vigilance Hutchinson would have gained him to the royalist party; and that it was often with great pains that they prevented him from going over to the other side. It was a serious charge for even a political opponent to make in a day when vilification was as common and as bitter as it has ever been. But the assertion, whatever ground it may have had, did not gain sufficient credence with the people of Massachusetts to prevent the election of Hancock to their chief magistracy.[2]

[1] "In 1771 Hancock gave such signs of disgust at his former (Whig) associates and opinions that Hutchinson had strong hopes of bringing him over to the Tory side. . . . But his recreancy was short." — Hosmer, "Life of Hutchinson," p. 210.

[2] The question of Hancock and Adams being offered peerages as bribes to ensure their loyalty is one of the impressions which lack sufficient foundation. If they had been approached on the subject, as sundry persons were at a later day with more substantial offers, it would have been noised abroad. But Hancock and Adams were too early and firm in their attitude toward the

This wavering of the left wing was one of the incidents belonging to a time of discouragement when in 1771 Admiral Montague brought twelve ships to anchor in Boston harbor. Sedition could not spread or greatly flourish under their guns, and might have died out if the efforts of Adams and Hawley had not been ceaseless. In the proposed surrender of the Castle to an officer of the king, and in the payment of royal officers' salaries by the crown they saw signs of "despotic administration." This indignity brought Adams to develop an idea which had occurred to him nine years before, which may be regarded as the latest germ of all the association, confederation, and union that followed.

In the "Boston Gazette" of October 2, 1772, he closed an appeal with these words: — "Let every Town assemble. Let Associations and Combinations be everywhere set up to consult and recover our just Rights." Out of this suggestion came the Committees of Correspondence, which eventually united towns and colonies in a single purpose and in a common cause. The scheme did not at first commend itself to all the patriot party. Hancock, with Phillips, Cushing, and the selectmen of influence were opposed to it; and when Adams by a flank movement in town-meeting obtained a vote for a Committee of Corre-

royal policy to encourage royal advances. Instead they had threats from the throne.

spondence to consist of twenty-one persons, prominent men would not serve on it, Hancock among others. As finally constituted, Otis was chairman; Adams, Warren, and Church taking the responsibility of preparing a document setting forth the rights of colonists, how they had been violated, and the sense of the town of Boston respecting the situation. Contrary to the general expectation this statement, sent broadcast, produced a marvellous effect, causing similar committees to be formed in other towns and colonies. It also raised a long controversy with Governor Hutchinson, in which he announced the king's disapproval of such committees and their extra-legislative and irresponsible doings.

Hancock was not long out of sympathy with Adams nor beyond his influence. Their friendship had been so strong that in 1772 the merchant had employed Copley to paint both their portraits to be hung together in his drawing-room, where they remained for fifty years, afterward adorning Faneuil Hall, and now to be seen in the Art Museum. Such companions were not likely to become permanently estranged over an untried proposition. In its great success Adams could afford to forgive Hancock and the rest of the doubters; and the gentleman was ready to accord the politician the praise he merited. Moreover, Adams had uses for his wealthy, popular, and aristocratic friend; who in turn was willing to be employed in a move-

ment which was growing in popularity in his own circle.

In the summer of 1773 Hancock had an opportunity to be a party in an affair which marvellously excited the town and country. It was not a strictly creditable performance to obtain the letters of Governor Hutchinson, Lieutenant-governor Oliver, the customs-officer Paxton, and of other loyalists written to English friends, and to send them back to Boston, to be used for what they were worth and much more by the revolutionary party, on the plea that the end justifies the means. The sagacious Franklin, hitherto held in as high esteem in Europe as in America, had some exercise in casuistry for the share he had in obtaining the letters and for the advice he gave with regard to making the most of them here; for which he was soundly rated by the solicitor-general before the Privy Council. He could reply that tampering with the mails was a part of the postal service of Great Britain and a diversion of the king himself; that these very letters had been shown to English statesmen; and that the writers of them had taken the same liberty with the correspondence of others. It was a practice which accorded with a blunt sense of honor, shown in more serious ways in that loose age. Franklin, charged with thievery, was dismissed from his deputy postmaster general's office, and in consequence resigned the agency for Massachusetts and came home to stay until he

returned in 1775 as the representative of a new nation.[1]

Political capital was made of the letters in Boston. John Hancock, always fond of a dramatic situation, was the first to give them publicity by announcing to the Assembly that within eight and forty hours a discovery would be made which would have great results! For two days he enjoyed the wondering of the town and the respect of the multitude as the possessor of a mysterious state secret of vast importance. Its proportions grew as the report of it spread throughout the Province. Samuel Adams added to the wonder by having the galleries cleared when the Assembly met, as he had matters of profound consequence to place before it, and spoke darkly of a rumor that letters had been sent to England prejudicial to the Province by men within it. Hancock contributed to the total effect by saying that copies had been put into his hands on the street, and they were no longer private. It looked as if their publicity was through him. It has been asserted that they were obtained at first with the understanding that they were to be kept secret. Adams read them to the Assembly. A committee appointed to consider them reported that they were "designed to overthrow the government and to

[1] Interesting comment on this affair, which has had many explanations, can be found in C. A. W. Pownall's "Life of Governor Thomas Pownall," p. 250.

introduce arbitrary power into the Province." Outside curiosity was immense, and was fostered by mysterious exclamations over a secret which could not be told; but resolves about the letters were published, tending to exaggerate the harm and prepare the people for the worst interpretation that could be put upon them when they should be printed. Then it was seen that after all the worst thing that Hutchinson had written was, in effect, that in his opinion there must be an abridgment of English liberties in a colony three thousand miles from the parent state — liberties which they might enjoy in England where every one is represented in Parliament — a sentiment he had often uttered in public. Letters of Oliver and Paxton were stronger in their expressions, but the writers were of less consequence. The proposal of one to deal with "incendiaries," and of the other to have two or three regiments sent, added inflammatory material to the general indignation. Importance was gained by Adams and Hancock; but the whole affair, as a recent reviewer of it has remarked, was an instance of a great cry and little wool. At this distance it seems as if the principals knew that the doubtful ethics in making public use of private correspondence must be covered by an extraordinary exploiting of a necessity in order to the common weal, when it could not have been much affected if the letters had remained with their recipients, as they would if Franklin had

not obtained them and transmitted them, and if Sam Adams had not magnified their importance. As Franklin suggested to him, the patriot leader raised a mist around them — which naturally made them gigantic spectres. Incidentally, and in the lapse of years, the occurrence showed how trickery detracts from honor in a good cause, dimming the final glory. If the impatient promoters of righteous discontent had waited a little they would have learned that ship-loads of provocation were on the Atlantic headed for Boston.

Meanwhile Hancock's business affairs, great and small, were not wholly neglected. Trade was dull, importations were discouraged, and his ships returning with ballast only, "coals, hemp, duck, and grindstones." Goods were returned to London with the message: —

"We can't always submit. It is a true saying 'Oppression will make a wise man mad.'" . . .

And two sentences after.

"I have to express my grateful acknowledgements to your Mr. John Harrison for his very genteel present of the table cloth & napkins. They are excessive genteel and by far the best in the Country. My Aunt joins me in her Compliments to you & connection Particularly to the Lady of Mr. G. H. with every wish in her favor." [1]

[1] As early as 1767 Hancock broke with his London agents, Barnard and Harrison. His letters to them show that he had too good an opinion of his standing and credit to be slighted by them or to be prevented from protest against oppressive measures. For these extracts see A. B. Brown's "His (Letter) Book," pp. 149, ff.

In the winter of 1770 he ships "Oyl, Pottashes & whalebone" to London and calls for salt from Lisbon, sells his ship "John" and has a new one built for the spring trade. But in April he has an attack of "indisposition," probably the gout, but after six months he writes: "with the Leave of an Indulgent Providence I am not without a prospect of seeing you & my friends in London by the middle of June next."

When that month came he wrote: —

"I have been for some time past and still am so engaged in our General Assembly that I cannot now particularly Reply to your last fav'r. . . . I have delivered to Capt. Hall the Size of Glass with directions for a New Meeting house Building in this town" —

Brattle Street Church, the Hancocks' place of worship, whose corner-stone bore the name of Hon. John Hancock in recognition of his gift of $1,000, with mahogany pulpit, furniture, and deacons' seat, besides free seats for poor widows and others. He also gave a Bible to a Church in Lunenburg, a bell to another in Jamaica Plain, a fire engine to the town of Boston and a bell to the Brattle Street Church when it was completed. He had some time before ordered from London

"as neat a Mahogany Cabinet as can be made, suitable for a Lady's chamber, rather convenient than Remarkable for any outward Decorations. I would have it very neat & respectable as it is for my Aunt, widow of my late Uncle,

with whom I now Reside, & a Lady for whom I have the highest affection & Esteem."

Three weeks later he orders

"100 squares of best London glass 18 by 11½ for the use of my own House wch, I pray may be the very best."

An honor which was gratifying to Hancock's military ambitions was his appointment "to be Captain of the Company of Cadets with the rank of Colonel." This company was known as the Governor's Guard; and this advertisement straightway appeared: —

"Wanted. Immediately — For His Excellency's Company of Cadets.

Two Fifers that understand Playing. Those that are masters of musick and are inclined to engage with the Company, are desired to apply to Col. John Hancock."

CHAPTER IX

TAXED TEA

THE very day of the Boston Massacre, so called, Lord North, prime minister and leader of the "king's friends," or Tory party, moved a repeal of all the Townshend Act except the tax upon tea. This was to be retained in order to maintain the right of Parliament to tax the colonies, and to show the king's determination to have his way.[1] Removal of taxes upon other articles, and the government's assurance that it "had never intended to lay further taxes upon America for the purpose of raising a revenue" quieted merchants, who kept their peace for a while, and trade with England[2] almost quadrupled within the next two years, despite the king's meddling in the province's affairs by removing the Assembly to Cambridge,

[1] "At no time during the Revolutionary struggle was it proposed that the colonists should be taxed for the support of the home government, or even for the *full* support of the armies in America." — Van Tyne, "Preliminaries of the Revolution," p. 104. Lord North said that Americans had no objection to submit to the authority of the Crown. It was to the claims of Parliament that they were adverse, objecting to being subjects of other subjects. — Marks' "England and America," II, 1057.

[2] Amounting to £2,000,000 in 1770.

interfering with its prerogatives, dismissing judges, as in South Carolina, forbidding hindrance of the slave trade when Virginia would have discouraged it, asserting the right to levy taxes in Maryland, and in enforcing the revenue laws in Rhode Island, as in the instance of the "Gaspee's" seizures. All together, George the Third was laying up trouble for himself in provoking revolt. The last indignity was reached when it was proposed to transport offenders to England for trial, the authority for which Virginia appointed a committee to inquire into; also another committee to correspond with other colonies. Five colonies followed the example, and the first steps toward union had been taken by July, 1773.

This action was seen to be timely in the light of events which soon followed. The first was the arrival of three shiploads of tea; a fourth was lost on the shore of Cape Cod. In token of their denial of the right to tax them without their consent the colonists had abjured the use of tea, although by the removal of duties of export its cost was made only half the price in England. It was an attractive bait for loyalty, thrown to a thrifty and tea-loving people; but principle was proof against even half-price tea — that is, the principle of the liberty party. The removal of duties was also designed to relieve the East India Company, which had an accumulation of 17,000,000 pounds unsold in its warehouses, threatening

a loss of 400,000 pounds sterling annually to the government.[1] But, although the duty was remitted, the king would not give up his threepenny principle. He meant to be a king in all his dominions, and as Lord North said, "to try the question with America." He had made it easy for the horse to come to the trough; the beast had got to drink. Nothing but the proverbial difficulty intervened, namely, the brute's will. He had the national thirst for the beverage, and brewed all sorts of substitutes. It was sheer perversity, and this must be overcome. Accordingly, in the fall of 1773, cargoes of the herb were sent to the principal towns along the coast. Agents and consignees refused to receive it, and it was stored or sent back to London from three ports. Boston sent it elsewhere.

First, of course, a town-meeting was held, swelled by the inhabitants of six other towns to a mass-meeting in Old South, resolving that the tea should be sent back. The king's officials took fright and fled to the Castle for safety. Clearance papers could not be had; the governor could not let the ships pass out; the people would not let the tea be landed. On the 17th of December it might legally be seized and stored in the Castle for payment of duties. Everybody knows

[1] Half the tea used in Great Britain was contraband, but in the Colonies not one-tenth of this commodity paid duty. — Belcher's "First American Civil War," 1, 18.

the rest, — the "Mohawks," the broken chests, three hundred and forty-two of them; the tea in windrows along Dorchester beach in the morning, and great lamentation among the dames of Boston. It was the first price of their patriotism; and Admiral Montague out in the harbor was adding besides, "You've got to pay the fiddler yet." Rigby, Paymaster of the Forces, said in Parliament that John Hancock had superintended the destruction of the tea. While Sam Adams was adjourning the meeting with the words, "This meeting can do no more to save the country," Hancock was not far from the notorious Captain Mackintosh, leader of the South End toughs, who boasted that his "chickens did the job," while Hancock's Cadets, the governor's guard, were doubtless in the gang, although the governor had recently notified their distinguished colonel to have them in readiness for an emergency.

Four days after the "tea-party," December 21, 1773, Hancock wrote to his London agents: —

"We have been much agitated in consequence of the arrival of the Tea Ships by the East India Conpany, and after every effort was made to Induce the consignees to return it from whence it came & all proving ineffectual, in a very few Hours the whole of the Tea on Board Bruce, Coffin, & Hall was thrown into the salt water. The particulars I must refer you to Capt. Scott for; indeed I am not acquainted with them myself, so as to give a Detail. Capt. Loring in a Brig with the remainder of the Tea is cast on shore at the back of Cape Codd. Philadelphia & York are

Determined the Tea shall not land. I enclose you an extract of a letter I Rec'd from Phila., by which you will see the spirit of that people. No one circumstance could possibly have taken place more effectively to unite the Colonies than this manouvre of the Tea. It is Universally Resented here & all people of all ranks detest the measure. Our papers & Dr. Williamson, who is passenger in Scott, will inform you many circumstances. I Determine if my Oyle gets up tomorrow my Brigt. *Lydia* shall depart in six days. I shall recommend her to be sold." [1]

From this point Hancock's letters are interrupted for three months by illness, during which his correspondence is conducted by William Palfrey, his confidential clerk, afterward aide-de-camp to Washington at Cambridge and New York. Despite his "indisposition" he was again elected to the General Court, receiving all but two of the votes cast. It was a busy and anxious winter, and its duties interfered sadly with his commercial affairs, which also suffered from the disturbances of the time.

By the 5th of March he had recovered sufficiently to bear a fresh honor that had been thrust upon him. The patriot party had made the

[1] "His Book," p. 178. Hancock offered to ship back to England at his own expense such stores of tea as were on hand in Boston; an offer which was eagerly accepted and acted upon. — "Beginnings of the Revolution," Chase, I, 168. If Hancock had imported any tea and paid the duty on it, as it seems he had, John Adams could say, "Mr H. I believe is justifiable, but I am not certain whether he is strictly so." — "Diary," p. 381. But he could also say of his own business, "What the deuce has a lawyer to do with truth anyway?" — *Ib.*, p. 396.

most of the street encounter of March, 1770. First, they dignified it by calling it a Massacre, although only five were killed. Then they took care to revive and recall the memory of it year by year on each anniversary.[1] Two orators were appointed the first year, Thomas Young and James Lovell. Joseph Warren and Benjamin Church followed in the two succeeding years, dwelling upon the first shedding of blood by British soldiers, upon the wrongs inflicted by the government, and upon rights to be maintained by Englishmen in America. The next orator to be chosen was John Hancock. He was the natural successor of the last two as leaders in the revolt, Sam Adams being always first, although not appearing in the list of orators who for thirteen years discoursed on the anniversary of the fight, until in 1783 the Fourth of July took its place as a national celebration. But Adams was sure to be behind the selection of speakers, if not their orations.

[1] The following vote was passed year after year with undiminished zeal for thirteen years: —

"That the Town make choice of a Proper Person to deliver an Oration at such time as may be Judged most convenient to commemorate the barbarous Murder of five of our Fellow Citizens on that fatal Day, and to impress upon our minds the ruinous tendency of standing Armies in Free Cities, and the necessity of such noble exertions in all future times, as the Inhabitants of the Town then made, whereby the dangers of Conspirators against the public Liberty may be still frustrated." — "Boston Town Records," 1771, p. 48. "John Hancock generously offered to put the Orator's Desk in Mourning on the Day the Oration is to be pronounced." — *Ib.*, p. 51.

Hancock's performance was received with appreciation by his audience. It did not lack audacity, giving offence to the governor, and particularly to officers of the army, and of course to Loyalists when he touched upon matters beyond the retaliatory firing by the troops, as "the attempt of Parliament to enforce obedience to acts which neither God nor man ever authorized them to make." His invective against a preference of riches to virtue had a force which his known wealth gave to it:—"Despise the glare of wealth. The people who pay greater respect to a wealthy villain than to an honest, upright man in poverty almost deserve to be enslaved." It is, however, as an expression of the general sentiment of the community that the oration is of value, and the following paragraphs may stand for the whole:—

"It was easy to foresee the consequences which so naturally followed upon sending troops into America. It was reasonable to expect that troops who knew the errand they were sent upon would treat the people whom they were to subjugate with a cruelty and haughtiness which too often buries the honorable character of a soldier in the disgraceful name of an unfeeling ruffian. The troops, upon their first arrival, took possession of our senate-house, and pointed their cannon against the judgment-hall, and even continued them there whilst the Supreme Court of judicature for the province was actually sitting to decide upon the lives and fortunes of the king's subjects. Our streets nightly resounded with the noise of riot and debauchery; our peaceful citizens were hourly exposed to shameful insults, and often felt the effects of their violence and outrage. But this was not all.

As though they thought it not enough to violate our civil rights, they endeavored to deprive us of our religious privileges; to vitiate our morals, and thereby render us deserving of destruction. Hence the rude din of arms which broke in upon your solemn devotions in your temples, on that day hallowed by Heaven, and set apart by God himself for his peculiar worship. Hence impious oaths and blasphemies so often tortured your unaccustomed ear. Hence all the arts which idleness and luxury could invent were used to betray our youth of one sex into extravagance and effeminacy, and the other to infamy and ruin. And did they not succeed but too well; Did not a reverence for religion decay? Did not our youth forget they were Americans, and, regardless of the admonitions of the wise and aged, servilely copy from their tyrants those vices which must finally overthrow the empire of Great Britain? . . .

"But I forbear, and come reluctantly to the scenes of that dismal night, when in such quick succession we felt the extremes of grief, astonishment, and rage; when heaven in anger, for a dreadful moment suffered hell to take the reins; when Satan with his chosen band opened the sluices of New England blood, and sacrilegiously polluted our land with the dead bodies of her guiltless sons. . . .

"Dark and designing knaves, murderers, and parricides! how dare you tread upon the earth which has drunk the blood of slaughtered innocence shed by your hands? how dare you breathe this air which wafted to the ear of heaven the groans of those who fell a sacrifice to your accursed ambition? But if the laboring earth doth not expand her jaws; if the air you breathe is not commissioned to be minister of death; yet, hear it, and tremble; the eye of Heaven penetrates the darkest chambers of the soul; and you, though screened from human observation, must be arraigned, must lift up your hands, red with the blood of those whose death you have procured, at the tremendous bar of God.

"But I gladly quit the theme of death — I would not dwell too long upon the horrid effects which have already followed from quartering regular troops in this town; let our misfortunes instruct posterity to guard against these evils. Standing armies are sometimes composed of persons who have rendered themselves unfit to live in civil society; who are equally indifferent to the glory of a George or a Louis; who for the addition of a penny a day to their wages, would desert from the Christian Cross, and fight under the Crescent of the Turkish Sultan; from such men as these, what has not a state to fear? with such as these, usurping Cæsar passed the Rubicon; with such as these, he humbled mighty Rome and forced the mistress of the world to own a master in a traitor. These are the men whom sceptred robbers now employ to frustrate the designs of God, and render vain the bounties which his gracious hand pours indiscriminately upon his creatures." [1]

So far as these quotations go the effect of war upon morality, especially in connection with the presence of troops quartered in the town, is a principal part of his theme. If it had a purpose it was to keep those regiments out of the town by portraying the danger to some of the citizens and their families by having them so near, presumably to Loyalists, as Patriots had no fear of the wiles of their foes, not even of the gallant officers who were not unwelcome in some Tory houses.

The portrayal of the first encounter would emphasize the animosity to be cherished and maintained against British soldiers, and ultimately inform the home government how they were detested, and perhaps foster a spirit of resistance

[1] For the entire oration see Loring's "Hundred Boston Orators."

to their intrusion, which might be useful if further incursions were made. Other commonplaces of the occasion were treated, according to the testimony of John Adams, in a manner beyond his own and everybody's expectation. Hancock's appearance was imposing and the impression most favorable. He was a graceful and dignified speaker, already accustomed to large assemblies and the trying duties of a presiding officer.[1]

But who had the impertinence to suggest that Sam Adams, who presided on that occasion and thanked the speaker in the name of the town for his "spirited and elegant oration," had a large share in its composition? It is not necessary to suppose that he contributed anything beyond suggestion and revision, such as party advisers have always been known to give their leaders on important occasions. Hancock's letters show that some corrections would improve them; and doubtless the same was true of his oration: still there is nothing in it that was out of the range of current thought at the date of its delivery. Adams himself was not a remarkable writer at first, but by constant practice in newspapers that were always open to him he at length attained a proficiency which was most serviceable to the cause he championed.

If in his zeal to magnify Adams his great-grand-

[1] "Sam Adams heard with admiration John Hancock, who might be trusted not to fall below the topmost altitude of the occasion." — Trevelyan, "American Revolution," II, 276.

son biographer intended to honor him by asserting that "it was known to a few that he composed nearly the whole of this oration for his friend," he involved both men in a disingenuous proceeding, to say the least.[1] Unfortunately he bases his statement upon a letter written thirteen years later, which was lost, and upon the word of Adams's daughter and a nephew who used to say that the two patriots were often closeted together before the oration was delivered. A scurrilous pamphleteer in England also wrote: "That mighty wise patriot, Mr. John Hancock, has lately repeated a hash of abusive, treasonable stuff, composed for him by the joint efforts of the Rev. Divine, Samuel Cooper, that Rose of Sharon, and the very honest Samuel Adams, Clerk." And at home the Tory Dr. Bolton, in a lampooning oration the next year, said of the two: "But generous John scorns to let him (Adams) starve; his purse strings have been at Sam's disposal ever since he assisted in making the oration delivered by John, on the 5th of March, 1774, to a crowded audience of Narragansett Indians." There is some smoke here, but how much fire it is impossible to tell at this distant day. When it is remembered that the quantity of smoke depends upon the poor quality of rubbish thrown upon the fire, large allowance may be made for both the orator and his adviser. It is better to look at the speech itself.

[1] Wells's "Life of Samuel Adams," II, 138.

It is an illuminating comment on the state of public feeling, and upon the standards of oratory at the time, that Hancock's oration should excite great admiration. Contemporary testimony pronounced him a "graceful speaker, self-possessed and dignified, and having a good understanding of his townsmen." The address was beyond what would be expected of a business man, although he was well educated and should have been well read in the literature current in New England. If the rhetoric of the oration is turgid and its tone verging upon bombast, the excited frame of mind and the unformed taste of the crowd which filled Old South may account for its reception "with universal applause." It was certainly a bold flight and evidently a successful feat in oratorical aviation, due largely to the sustaining power of a buoyant atmosphere in a sympathetic assembly. For a first attempt the speaker had every reason to congratulate himself; as he was also admired and commended by his friends. When John Adams recorded that "the composition, the pronunciation, the action, all exceeded the expectation of everybody," he included two qualities out of three that must have been the speaker's own; and when Hancock in closing pointed out Samuel Adams as "one of those who should grace the annals of history," it must be supposed that this was a sentence from his own pen which Adams would not have had the assurance to write. If, again, Adams

was responsible for a large part of the speech, his self-complacency must have been gratified when he thanked Hancock in the name of the town for his oration and requested a copy for publication. When they next met they may have tried to reconcile a seeming inconsistency by recalling the needs of the hour. Perhaps they smiled at each other as the Roman Augurs did when the people had gone away.

This effort in a period of ill health so taxed Hancock's depleted energies that, when five days after he was chosen moderator of a town-meeting, he was unable to preside. Yet he was again elected one of the Board of Selectmen, also one of the firewardens of the town, a humble but responsible office of superintending citizens' efforts at a conflagration, even to authorizing the blowing up of buildings. A greater honor was thrust upon him May 10, when he was unanimously elected to the General Court, with Cushing, Sam Adams, and William Phillips as associates.[1] The Court met a fortnight later, called together by Governor Hutchinson just before his departure

[1] On July 26 he was elected one of the Committee of Safety, consisting of seven members, and was by them chosen their chairman. Their business was "to consider proper measures to be adopted for the common safety during those exigencies of our public affairs which may reasonably be expected from acts of the British Parliament altering the course of justice and annihilating our free Constitution." The powers of this Committee were large and general. "Hancock was the most notable member." — Trevelyan's "American Revolution," I, 272.

for England. Gage as his successor and Captain General adjourned the Assembly to meet at Salem on June 9, by royal command, in order to remove all seditious elements out of Boston. Its port was closed on the first of the month to all incoming vessels, and after the 14th none were to be allowed to depart, not even a ferry boat to Cambridge, until the town should pay for the tea it had pitched into the harbor.

It is difficult at this distance to adjust the destruction of 12,000 pounds sterling worth of merchandise with the noble aims of patriots. The mob was not raised by a sudden gust of fury, but was a well-organized crowd that had time enough to deck itself in the toggery of savages and conceal the identity of some well-known elements in it. The only way to give it any respectability is to assume that it was the culmination of a long violation of oppressive revenue laws. Trade and profits had been interfered with. This outbreak was a protest against taxing citizens of a great empire by the government. The excuse of non-representation in Parliament was a question which in England was seldom discussed, notwithstanding the practical slighting of a large part of the population in the matter of franchise. As the laws and the constitution stood, the justification of this riot, as in that which destroyed Governor Hutchinson's house, library, and other valuables, must be found in the fact that it was one step towards

independence, although unnecessary and lawless. It does not contribute to the glory of the final achievement as compared with other pages of its entire record.

Of course the British government regarded the outbreak as a bold defiance of its authority, and the king was irate that his assertion of royal prerogative had been scorned by a Boston mob, in which, as has always been the case, there was more or less of broadcloth. Consequently five repressive measures were hurried through Parliament, — closing the port of Boston;[1] appointing chief magistrates by the king and upper house; hampering town-meetings; sending persons to England for trial; and quartering troops upon citizens. A few protested against taking away the privileges in a fortnight which colonists had enjoyed for a hundred and fifty years, but the majority of the Commons and all the Lords voted for the punitive measures to the great delight of the king. By June 1 Boston harbor was blockaded with a line of British ships and in a few days troops and guns were landed. The town was in General Gage's hands, out of business and practically out of food. The offer of wharves came from Marblehead; supplies and money from towns and cities, even from London and Montreal.[2] Differ-

[1] For the text of the Boston Port Bill, which annoyed the town and all the sympathizing provinces beyond everything else, see MacDonald's "Select Charters," p. 337.

[2] For examples of relief from other colonies see "Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll.," IV, 22, 45, 83.

ing communities began to crystallize around the idea of similar interests and the need of mutual assistance. A congress of the colonies was called to meet at Philadelphia. Rhode Island was the first to choose delegates; Massachusetts two days later; other colonies following in the next month, and on September 5, 1774, fifty-five deputies from twelve colonies constituted the first Continental Congress.

CHAPTER X

PROVINCIAL CONGRESS

Under the pressure maintained by men-of-war in Boston harbor a large number of citizens advocated an indemnity to the East India Company; but at a town-meeting called to consider the matter no one dared openly to sustain the proposal. Meantime the Assembly at Salem was gradually coming to a counter movement. This was to elect five delegates to meet those who had been or should be appointed from other colonies, to constitute the First Continental Congress. It was a bold measure, managed by Sam Adams with great labor, skill, and secrecy, and passed behind closed doors. Several wished to escape, but Adams had the key in his pocket. One got out on the plea of illness, and straightway told the governor what was going on. Gage's messenger, sent to dismiss the Assembly, could not obtain admittance and had to read the order to an outside crowd from the stairway. Five delegates meanwhile were chosen, — James Bowdoin, Thomas Cushing, Samuel Adams, John Adams, and Robert Treat Paine.[1]

[1] For members of Congress from Massachusetts and other colonies see "Journals of Continental Congress," I, 16.

The absence of John Hancock's name from this list is so noteworthy as to provoke inquiry. When the Assembly met at Salem Sam Adams was occupied with a committee meeting in Boston and was delayed so long that his friends, taunted by Tories with the question, "Where is your leader?" began to fear that a report was true which was circulating that Adams and Hancock had been arrested and were to be transported to England for trial.[1] At length Adams appeared, and ordering a gold-laced functionary out of the secretary's chair proceeded to his clerical duties. It has been said that Hancock waited to take Adams to Salem in his carriage and entered the hall with him. If so, there may have been an understanding between them as they drove on the road that Hancock should remain in charge of affairs at home, while a less useful man should complete the number of the delegation to Philadelphia. This supposition is strengthened by the circumstance that John Adams, who had not been the most ardent of liberty men, was moderator at a town-meeting over which Hancock would naturally have presided if he had not been occupied elsewhere. Likewise he may have surrendered a place in favor of John Adams as delegate to the Congress, which seems

[1] The British general Mackay told Governor Hutchinson at Bath in 1775 that he wondered Hancock had not been secured. It was reported in England that he had absconded on the arrival of the troops; afterward found to be untrue. — "Diary and Letters of Thomas Hutchinson," by Peter O. Hutchinson, pp. 349, 356.

to have increased the devotion of the latter to the patriot cause, as it certainly brought him to the beginning of an eminent career. Among prominent men who were not delegates to the first Congress were Otis, Hawley, Jefferson, Hamilton, and Franklin. The same question with regard to the reasons why they were not elected deputies might be raised in the case of each one as in the instance of Hancock. Absence from this Congress does not appear to have much significance.

In any case, Hancock was unusually busy during the summer and until the next meeting of the Assembly in October, but not with his commercial affairs, for his ships were moored at his wharf and the warehouse deserted. Not even a boat could be rowed to Long Wharf, nor a scow from the harbor islands with sheep, nor a Gloucester smack bring a load of fish. Provisions must come by land or not at all. The Board of Selectmen, of which Hancock was a member, met from week to week to consider many questions which were new by reason of the blockaded town's changed condition. But when at the request of General Gage a meeting was called to receive notice that two Acts of Parliament recently passed forbade the calling of town-meetings without special license from the governor, Hancock was conveniently absent; and the others were not disturbed, as they happened to have two adjourned meetings on their hands with the power of further

and indefinite adjournment, and with enough unfinished business to last through the year. Hancock found plenty to do while the delegates were in Philadelphia in September, and until the next meeting of the General Court in October.

What Congress did in its first session is not so immediately a part of this story as the acts of the Second Congress the following year; but the sending of delegates from Massachusetts was the colony's contribution to an event of great consequence. The inhabitants of Boston were conscious of its importance and had voted five hundred pounds for the expenses of the deputies. They were also profoundly interested in the spectacular departure of their representatives in a coach and four provided for them, preceded by two white servants mounted and armed, and followed by four blacks in livery, starting near the Hancock mansion in full view of the British regiments encamped on the Common. Then came a parting dinner, given by compatriots at Coolidge's in Watertown, with many words of cheer and good hope. Another public dinner at Hartford six days later, with an escort to Wethersfield where "punch, wine, and coffee were cordially and genteelly furnished" by Silas Deane.

A company of notables met them seven miles this side of New Haven, conducting them into the town amidst pealing bells and booming cannon. There were six days of visiting and feasting,

private and public, in New York; a convoy of carriages into Philadelphia, where they had arrived after a nineteen days' pilgrimage, "dirty, dusty, and tired," to be quartered at "the most genteel tavern in America" and entertained in company with other distinguished persons from other colonies for seven days until Congress met. All this and more was a series of sensations which John Hancock must have regretted the loss of when he learned the details by slow returning letters. Again he might mourn over not being among the illustrious fifty-three who met at the City Tavern on the fifth of September and walked to Carpenters' Hall. He certainly would have been an ornament to the assemblage, outshining Samuel Adams dressed in the new suit which his friends had provided him, and to which Hancock had doubtless contributed liberally. But he could not have surpassed Adams in the estimate which had been formed of this "chief of the Revolution" by deputies from other colonies, and whose opinion was to be strengthened by further acquaintance. Strict Congregationalist as he was, Adams made a most fortunate stroke at the outset when he moved that "Mr. Duché, an Episcopal clergyman, might be desired to read prayers to the Congress," thereby removing one great cause of disagreement by waiving his own religious preferences.[1]

[1] This chaplain afterward, in a letter to Washington, avowed his sympathies with the Loyalist side.

The doings of the First Congress, as has been remarked, are connected with the career of John Hancock only in a preliminary way. They were preparatory to the next and succeeding meetings in bringing together men of opposite prejudices and forming them into a working body, consulting about common interests and dangers, but slow to act with unanimity. The main acts agreed upon were the Declaration of Rights and Grievances, and an Association to suspend trade with Great Britain, which became the precursor of federal union. Incidentally it was revealed to themselves and the British Government that the scattered provinces would not permit one of their number to be threatened or punished without united protest and resistance.

As might be expected, differences between colonies did not disappear in the seven weeks of discussion, notwithstanding the general good feeling, which was further promoted by the boundless hospitality of the town and its inhabitants. The majority were for keeping the union and establishing harmony with Great Britain: the minority, represented by Massachusetts and Virginia, advocated revolt. A test came on the twenty-third day of the session, when a plan for proposed union was presented, making a Colonial Council an inferior branch of Parliament. It came within a single vote of adoption; five colonies voting for it, six against it. What did pass was, a vote to suspend

trade with Britain, and to discontinue the slave trade. A petition was addressed to the king imploring redress of grievances; another to the people of Quebec, inviting them to send delegates to the next Congress; one also to the people of Great Britain, and a memorial to all the colonists. The main result, however, was the forming of an Association which was to be the beginning of union between the several independencies along the coast. There was much asseveration and protestation of loyalty, and disclaiming and denying of intention to separate from England; also busy preparation for what might happen. Washington wrote in October, 1774, that independence was not desired by any thinking man in all North America; yet two months before he had said that he would raise a thousand men, subsist them, and march at their head to the relief of Boston. Two months later he was in command of such a force. John Adams's words and Sam Adams's are two opposite statements of Massachusetts sentiment, the one for the old order, the other for the new; and each had his sympathizers, with constant shiftings of opinion and partisans. In that transition time John Bunyan's Mr. Facing-Both-Ways had here and there a political counterpart, and Timorous had not a few.[1]

[1] Even such a radical as Joseph Warren, in his Massacre oration of 1775, declared that "an independence of Great Britain is not our aim. No, our wish is, that Britain and the colonies, may, like

Many went over to the patriot side when Gage precipitated hostilities by ordering his troops to seize the Province's stock of powder stored in Charlestown. Militia and volunteers flocked towards Boston from Worcester and Hampshire counties, and from Connecticut, but were stopped by messengers from Boston. The governor had summoned an assembly of the royal regulation pattern to meet at Salem, and then countermanded the call. But two hundred and sixty representatives came and resolved themselves into a Provincial Congress and adjourned to Concord, where John Hancock was chosen its president. He had shown himself a good presiding officer; he was a most creditable person, a general favorite, a man who had been marked by the home government, and a generous contributor who would make further sacrifices. Who else so fit for the conspicuous position, and who would be more sensible of it and gratified by it?

Removing to Cambridge, the congress formed a military organization and appointed a committee of safety, of which John Hancock was chosen chairman, with power to call out the militia and procure military stores. They also chose three generals and ordered the election of company and regimental officers. A committee appointed to consider the proper time to provide arms and

the oak and the vine grow together." — Bancroft's "Hist. U. S.," VIII, 255.

ammunition reported that the proper time was *now*. Expressions of loyalty to the home government were less profuse than previously.

After this show of intention to resist hostile advances the king declared "the New England governments in a state of rebellion."

The First Provincial Congress marked the passing of legislative authority from the royal governor, with his council and assembly, to the elected representatives of the people in the Province of Massachusetts — a prelude to future transfers in other provinces, and at length in all of them together. In their proclamation of an annual Thanksgiving, issued over the signature of John Hancock, mention of his Majesty, George the Third, was for the first time omitted. Moreover the acts of this Congress were accepted by the people as of equal authority with those of previous assemblies under the king's appointed representative, who now in the person of General Gage was practically set aside. Accordingly he fell back upon his military authority and precipitated the conflict. The rift between England and America which had been dreaded by many and desired by very few now became plain to all.

In the interval between the adjournment of the first Congress, December 10, 1774, and the meeting of the second, February 1, 1775, Hancock as a selectman was occupied daily in devising means for the control of the small-pox which the troops

had brought to town. The disease was not to be suppressed easily and it gave the authorities great anxiety and care.

When the Congress met again for its second session, with two hundred and fourteen members present, Hancock was chosen its president by unanimous election. Within four days he was putting a motion to direct Colonel Roberson to deliver four brass field-pieces and two mortars, the property of the Province, to the Committee of Safety, which had been appointed to resist every attempt at executing the acts of Parliament. General Gage also had his eye upon the cannon, but when he sent his officers to appropriate them nothing but the gun carriages could be found. In a school-house where they were supposed to be hidden, a box upon which the pedagogue Holbrook was resting his lame foot did not look like the lurking-place of field-pieces, and the searching party passed by two of the guns. They did good service during the war, to be at length enshrined in Bunker Hill monument, after further use by the Ancient and Honorable Artillery, which burst one of them, the "Adams," while the "Hancock" reposes in its original integrity with the following inscription: —

THE HANCOCK:

SACRED TO LIBERTY.

This is one of four cannon which constituted the whole train of Field Artillery possessed by the British colonies of North America at the commencement of the war on the 19th of April, 1775.

THIS CANNON

and its fellow, belonging to a number of citizens of Boston were used in many engagements during the war. The other two, the property of the Government of Massachusetts, were taken by the enemy.

By order of the United States, in Congress Assembled May 19, 1788

In this second Provincial Congress Hancock was chosen to fill the vacancy made by Bowdoin in the delegation to the Continental Congress. A larger field was opening before him. Nevertheless he did not fail to attend to the affairs nearest him in his own town. After the Congress adjourned on February 16 he inquired into an affair of the British troops who, headed by their colonel, had carried a back-countryman through the streets, tarred and feathered. In consequence of his part in this inquiry his "elegant house was

attacked by a number of officers, who with swords, cut and hacked the fence in a most scandalous manner and behaved very abusively, by breaking people's windows and insulting every person they met. On the following night they entered his grounds and refused to retire, telling the owner that his house and stable would soon be in their hands."

The second session of the Second Provincial Congress opened in Concord on the 22d of March with Hancock in the chair. In eleven days news came that Gage's army was to be largely reënforced. The Congress appointed a day of fasting and prayer, at the same time authorizing the Committee of Safety to form and pay six companies of artillery, urging the volunteer militia and minute-men to be on the alert, but forbidding any act provocative of hostilities. Like their Cromwellian ancestors they trusted in Divine Providence, and like them kept their powder dry.

CHAPTER XI

LOVERS IN LEXINGTON

When the Provincial Congress adjourned on the 15th of April Hancock and Adams did not go back to Boston, but staid in Lexington with Parson Jonas Clark, successor of Hancock's grandfather in the parish church. The two patriots had been guests at the parsonage during the session of Congress at Concord, the younger with better reason than the older; for his aunt Lydia had left her home on Beacon Hill after Gage's occupation of the town, and had taken refuge in the Lexington parsonage.

About midnight of the eighteenth Paul Revere on his ride into the country after he had seen the two lanterns in the belfry of North Church brought the message which Dr. Warren sent, that the inhabitants might expect a force from Gage which had started for Concord to destroy military stores.[1] Evidently the messenger knew the importance of the minister's house and where to find the two men most prominent in affairs. The eight sentries

[1] On the object of invading Lexington and Concord see Force, iv, "American Archives," II, 386, and F. V. Greene's "Revolutionary War," p. 3.

posted there might have indicated the presence of important persons; but to their caution to Revere not to make a noise he replied, "You will have noise enough before morning." Before outsiders got word Hancock caused the meeting-house bell to be set ringing for the remainder of the night, a signal understood throughout the countryside, calling together a hundred and fifty men before daybreak. Meantime he began to clean a gun and sword and to put his accoutrements in order with the intention of taking command of the men collecting on the common. From this he was with great difficulty dissuaded by Rev. Mr. Clark and Mr. Adams, the latter clapping him on the shoulder and remarking, "That is not our business; we belong to the cabinet." It was daybreak before Hancock could be persuaded that it was improper for a man in his official position to expose himself to capture by British troops, who had him and his comrade in particular view and had been inquiring as to their whereabouts.

When the courage of Adams and Hancock are considered comparatively, the latter appeared ready to supplement his avowed sentiments by sacrificing his life as well as his fortune for the cause. Adams, with no property to lose, might have had greater devotion to liberty, but his enthusiasm for it, voiced in a hundred meetings and penned in as many newspaper articles, did not compel him that night to call for musket and

sword when the enemy was approaching. No doubt his prudence was wise, and his wisdom needed more in council than his presence on Lexington Green with the "embattled farmers"; but the uncalculating determination of Hancock to fight, regardless of his wealth, high station, and great usefulness elicits admiration for a self-surrendering spirit more noble, if less wise, than his companion's prudence. For Adams, however, it may be urged that his withdrawal from danger was as essential to the conduct and ultimate success of the movement as the rearward position of a general in the field, where he may be able to direct the storm of battle. At any rate, Adams had a full sense of his friend's importance, as he well might have, and also of the need of preserving both their lives for further usefulness.[1] And he always had a consciousness of how great an advantage to the cause his friend Hancock could be made through his own wise direction.

There was another element in the resolve of Hancock to take the field which ennobles his determination and himself. To the protests of Adams and Parson Clark, Hancock's aunt Lydia would add her entreaties, which could not have been without weight with the man who had been as a

[1] "The king had excepted only from the benefit of pardon Samuel Adams and John Hancock, whose offences were deemed to be of too flagitious a nature to admit of any other consideration than condign punishment." — "Life and Times of George Washington," Schrœder and Lossing, II, 748.

son to her. But besides all these protests of prudence against endangering a valuable life there was a voice in the background which was of more weight and efficacy than the rest. When her chariot rolled out of Boston Madam Hancock had by her side a niece, Dorothy Quincy, who had for some time been under her care and protection. The maiden was the fourth in a succession of the same name, running through several generations of the Braintree family, the last member of which, Edmund, had lived in Boston on the south side of Summer Street, from 1740 to 1752, where the daughter Dorothy was born, May 10, 1747. Within five years her father left an unsuccessful mercantile business in town and returned to Braintree as a gentleman farmer, to whose homestead the principal men of the Province were attracted by five beautiful daughters. Among the notables came John Hancock, having in mind Dorothy Quincy, ten years younger than himself. Tradition has it that he avowed his affection for her before the Revolution broke out, and that plans were made to celebrate the wedding in the north parlor of her home, which had been adorned with new wall paper from Paris, appropriately figured "with the forms of Venus and Cupid in blue and pendant wreaths of flowers in red." Unfortunately the British arrived before the happy day and caused divisions and dispersions of families in the chaotic and unsafe years that followed.

Dorothy's father took refuge with an older daughter in Lancaster, and the girl herself was sufficiently approved by Madam Hancock to be taken into her home as the fiancée of her nephew. It was this relationship between John Hancock and Dorothy Quincy which gives special emphasis to the strength of his patriotism on the night when he could hardly be restrained from the Lexington encounter. In the face of appeals by her elders in the household his bride-elect would not be likely to gird on his sword and send him into the fight. If she had, he might have reënforced his own impulse by hers and gone, despite other counsel; but as hers, if like her aunt's, would be contrary to his own inclination and purpose, it is to his credit that his determination persisted as long as it did. Moreover he might know that the capture of himself and Adams was as much the object of the expedition as the seizing of a few military stores at Concord. Therefore his devotion to the cause of American freedom from British control was placed beyond the charge of selfish ambition through his willingness to range himself with the yeomanry of Middlesex in the first onset, and to sacrifice life in addition to fortune in the cause he had championed.

The counsels of a wise prudence prevailed, and he allowed himself to be dissuaded from exposure to death or arrest. One of the British officers sent out in advance of the troops had been inquir-

ing where Clark's tavern was: he should have asked for Clark's parsonage. When Adams learned this he judged that it was time to take himself and Hancock over to the Rev. Mr. Jones's house in Woburn. Dorothy was looking out of an upper window watching the fight and speeding their departure when "one of the first British bullets whizzed by her aunt's head as she stood in a door below and struck the barn." A message soon came saying where the two companions were and inviting the family to follow and bring a fine salmon that had been provided for dinner. It was taken along and cooked. Just as the company were sitting down to it a Lexington man, frightened by the troops returning from their raid upon Concord, shouted, "The British are coming! The British are coming!" Leaving their anticipated salmon, the two patriots were conducted by Cuff, the parson's negro, through the woods to Amos Wyman's house in a corner of Billerica at the Bedford line, where cold boiled pork, cold potatoes, and brown bread awaited them. It was on this forced march that Adams exclaimed, "What a glorious morning is this!" referring to the beginning of the contest for liberty. His more practical companion, surveying no doubt a resplendent costume unfitted for such a flight, asked the reason of what appeared an ill-timed enthusiasm, which he had attributed to the weather, in his own mind qualified by hunger and a hasty

walk through the pastures of Woburn in silk hose and velvet coat. Adams's old brown coat afforded no such distraction.

The British retreat to Boston under a galling fire from provincials, with a loss of two hundred and seventy-three killed, wounded, and missing, and of ninety-three on the American side, left Lexington a safe place for the returning fugitives. Then occurred a lovers' quarrel. Dorothy had left her father in Boston. With a daughter's solicitude she intended to return to him the next day, and told Hancock so. "No, Madam, you shall not return as long as there is a British bayonet in Boston." Her answer was as spirited as might be expected of a Quincy: "Recollect, Mr. Hancock, I am not under your control yet. I shall go to my father to-morrow."[1] When she gave an account of the contention forty-eight years afterwards, she added, "At that time I should have been very glad to get rid of him." But the matrimonial designs of Madam Hancock were not to be thwarted and she kept the niece within her reach. Therefore the two set out on a journey to Fairfield, Connecticut, when Adams and Hancock took their departure for Philadelphia, whither they proceeded from the Provincial Congress to the Continental after the Lexington and Concord

[1] A letter from Edmund Quincy to his daughter Dorothy may be found in the "Transactions of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts," VI, 319.

raid. Had it not been for their prudent excursion to Billerica their journey might have been to London to answer a charge of treason to the realm. As for Dorothy's recollection of her early sentiments, some confirmation of them appeared a little later. However, allowance can be made for the disillusions of nearly half a century and their effect upon her memory.[1]

[1] The "Dorothy Q." of Holmes's poem was his great-grandmother and aunt of Mrs. John Hancock. For an account of the "Three Dorothys" see W. S. Kennedy's "Oliver Wendell Holmes," p. 20.

CHAPTER XII

ON THE ROAD TO CONGRESS

On the 24th of April the two delegates arrived at Worcester in advance of three others, John Adams, Cushing, and Paine, whence all were to proceed together under escort. Not finding the rest of the delegation, Hancock wrote in alarm and uncertainty to the Committee of Safety at Watertown, whither the Provincial Congress had removed after the disturbance at Concord.

"Worcester, April 24, 1775.
"Monday Evening.

"Gentlemen:

"Mr. S. Adams and myself, just arrived here, find no intelligence from you, and no guard. We hear an express has just passed through this place to you, from New York, informing that the administration is bent upon pushing matters; and that four regiments are expected there. How are we to proceed? Where are our brethren? Surely, we ought to be supported. I had rather be with you; and, at present, am fully determined to be with you, before I proceed. I beg, by return of this express, to hear from you, and pray, furnish us with depositions of the conduct of the troops, the certainty of their firing first, and every circumstance relative to the conduct of the troops from the 19th instant, to this time, that we may be able to give some account of matters as we proceed, especially at Philadelphia,

also, I beg you would order your secretary to make out an account of your proceedings since what has taken place; what your plan is; what prisoners we have, and what they have of ours; who of note was killed, on both sides; who commands our forces &c.

"Are our men in good spirits? For God's sake do not suffer the spirit to subside, until they have perfected the reduction of our enemies. Boston *must* be entered; the troops must be sent away, . . . Our friends are valuable, but our country must be saved. I have an interest in that town. What can be the enjoyment of that town if I am obliged to hold it at the will of Gen. Gage or any one else? I doubt not your vigilance, your fortitude, and resolution. Do let us know how you proceed. We must have the Castle. Stop up the harbor against large vessels coming. You know better what to do than I can point out. Where is Mr. Cushing? Are Mr. Paine and Mr. John Adams to be with us? What are we to depend upon? We travel rather as deserters, which I will not submit to. I will return and join you, if I cannot detain this man, as I want much to hear from you. How goes on the Congress? Who is your president? Are the members hearty? Pray remember Mr. S. Adams and myself to all friends. God be with you.

"I am, gentlemen, your faithful and hearty countryman

"John Hancock.

"To the Gentlemen Committee of Safety."

After three days of waiting Adams and Hancock left Worcester, reaching Hartford in two days, on Saturday the 29th. There they held a conference with Governor Trumbull and planned the surprise of Fort Ticonderoga, which was effected by Ethan Allen, accompanied by Benedict Arnold, on the 9th of May. New York also had the same

purpose in mind when its Committee of Safety voted, "That as Messrs. Adams and Hancock are daily expected in this city, the Committee of Correspondence and Intelligence wait on them and request a private conference on the subject of the above letter," which the Albany Committee had sent them. But Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Vermont troops got the start of New York, and the next morning after the conference the fort was taken before the commander was fairly awake.

When Adams and Hancock reached King's Bridge on Saturday, May 6, they found that the rest of their delegation had passed them somewhere on the way and had arrived before them. John Adams, who had been ill with a fever, wrote in his Diary: "I was determined to go as far as I could, and instead of venturing on horseback, I got into a sulky attended by a servant on horseback, and proceeded on the journey. I overtook my colleagues before they reached New York." At King's Bridge they were joined by the Connecticut delegation, and made their entry into New York in the manner described by Hancock in the following letter to Dorothy Quincy.

"New York, *Sabbath Even'g*, May 7, 1775.

"My Dear Dolly:

"I Arrived well, tho' Fatigued, at King's Bridge at Fifty Minutes after Two o'clock yesterday, where I found the Delegates of Massachusetts and Connect', with a Number of Gentlemen from New York, and a Guard of the Troop.

I Din'd and then set out in the Procession for New York, the Carriage of your humble servant of course being first in the Procession. When we Arriv'd within three Miles of the City we were Met by the Grenadier Company and Regiment of the City Militia under Arms, Gentlemen in Carriages and on Horseback, and many Thousand of Persons on Foot, the Roads fill'd with people, and the greatest Cloud of Dust I ever saw. In this Scituation we Entered the City, and passing thro' the Principal Streets of New York amidst the Acclamations of Thousands were set Down at Mr. Francis's. After Entering the House three Huzzas were Given, and the People by Degrees Dispersed.

"When I got within a mile of the City my Carriage was stopt, and Persons appearing with proper Harnesses insisted upon Taking out my Horses and Dragging me into and through the City, a Circumstance I would not have had Taken place upon any consideration, not being fond of such Parade.

"I Beg'd and Intreated that they would Suspend the Design, and ask'd it as a favour, and the Matter Subsided, but when I got to the Entrance of the City, and the Numbers of Spectators increas'd to perhaps Seven Thousand or more, they Declar'd they would have the Horses out and would Drag me through the City. I repeated my Request, and I was obliged to apply to the Leading Gentlemen in the procession to intercede with them not to Carry their Designs into Execution; as it was very disagreeable to me. They were at last prevail'd upon and I proceded. I was much obliged to them for their good wishes and Opinion, in short no Person could possibly be more notic'd than myself.

"After having Rode so fast and so many Miles you may well think I was much Fatigu'd, but no sooner had I got into the Room of the House we were Visited by a great number of Gentlemen of the first Character in the city, who Took up the Evening.

"About 10 o'clock I Sat down to Supper of Fried Oysters, &c., at 11 o'clock went to Capt. Sears's (the King's Inn) and Lodg'd. Arose at 5 o'clock, went to the House first mentioned, Breakfasted, Dress'd, and went to Meeting, where I heard a most excellent Sermon by Mr. Livingston, Returned to the same House, a most Elegant Dinner provided.

"The Grenadier Company of the City is to Continue under Arms during our stay here, and we have a guard of them Night and Day at our Doors. This is a sad mortification for the Tories, things look well here.

"Tomorrow morning propose to Cross the Ferry. We are to have a large Guard in several Boats and a Number of the City Gentlemen will attend us over. I can't think they will Dare attack us.

"I beg you will write me. Do acquaint me every Circumstance Relative to that Dear Aunt of Mine; write Lengthy and often. Mr. Nath. Barrett and Mr. Buck are here. People move slowly out, they tell me, from Boston. My best Respects to mr. and Mrs. Burr. My poor Face and Eyes are in a most shocking scituation, burnt up and much swell'd and a little painfull. I don't know how to manage with it.

"Is your Father out? As soon as you know, do acquaint me, and send me the letters, and I will then write him. Pray let me hear from you by every Post. God bless you my Dr Girl, and believe me most Sincerly,

"Yours most Affectionately,

"JOHN HANCOCK." [1]

On Wednesday, the 10th, the delegates from

[1] "N. E. Historical and Genealogical Register," XIX, 135. The orthography of the eighteenth century does not denote illiteracy in a time when modes of spelling were optional, and every man did that which was right in his own eyes, — a condition which threatens to return in trolley-car advertising and elsewhere. See "Letters of James Murray, Loyalist," p. 153.

Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York, fourteen in all, proceeded on their triumphal progress towards Philadelphia. A great crowd attended them to the North River ferry, over which they were escorted by five hundred gentlemen and two hundred militia under arms. On the New Jersey side a number of gentlemen, a troop of horse, and a company of grenadiers accompanied them to Newark, where they were publicly entertained.[1] Then they were escorted to Elizabethtown, at the border of which they were met and conducted into the place by its chief citizens and the military. Similar honors attended them all the way to Philadelphia. The following account by Curwen, the Tory, in his "Journal" of May 10, 1775, gives a graphic but not entirely flattering picture of the last stage of the journey.

"Early in the morning a great number of persons rode out several miles, hearing that the Eastern delegates were approaching, when, about eleven o'clock the cavalcade appeared (I being near the upper end of Fore Street); first, two or three hundred gentlemen on horseback, preceded, however, by the newly chosen city military officers, two and two, with drawn swords, followed by John Hancock and Samuel Adams in a phaeton and pair, the former looking as if his journey and high living, or solicitude to support the dignity of the first man in Massachusetts, had impaired his health. Next came John Adams and Thomas Cushing in a single horse chaise; behind followed Robert Treat Paine, and after him the New York delegation and some from the Province

[1] "I drank Madeira at a great rate, and found no inconvenience in it." — John Adams's "Diary," p. 381.

of Connecticut etc. etc. The rear was brought up by a hundred carriages, the streets crowded with people of all ages, sexes, and ranks. The procession marched with a slow, solemn pace. On its entrance into the city, all the bells were set ringing and chiming, and every mark of respect that could be was expressed, not much, I presume, to the secret liking of their fellow-delegates from the other Colonies, who doubtless had to digest the distinction as best they could."

It was all dear to Hancock's heart, but not to Samuel Adams's, who with his democratic proclivities did not favor such parade; as indicated by the account of another and similar occasion: —

"The people were attempting to take the horses from the carriage in order to drag it themselves. Mr. Adams remonstrated against it. His companion, pleased with the intended compliment, was desirous of enjoying it, and endeavored to remove the objection of Mr. Adams, to which the last replied: 'If you wish to be gratified with so humiliating a spectacle, I will get out and walk, for I will not countenance an act by which my fellow-citizens shall degrade themselves into beasts.' This prevented its execution."

John Adams's sense of the performance as recorded in a letter to his wife is characteristic of a man who wasted no compliments: —

"P. S. I wish I had given you a complete history from the beginning to the end of the journey, of the behavior of my compatriots. No mortal tale can equal it. I will tell you in the future, but you shall keep it a secret. The fidgets, the whims, the caprice, the vanity, the superstition, the irritability of some of us is enough to ——

"Yours."

How he might have finished the sentence can

be imagined from other letters, one to Warren, for instance, in which he wrote: "A certain great fortune and piddling genius, whose fame has been trumpeted so loudly, has given a silly cast to our whole doings."[1] And again, of General Lee: "He is a queer creature, but you must love his dogs if you love him, and forgive a thousand whims for the sake of the soldier and the scholar."

It is fortunate that in the absence of other sidelights on this period the "Diary" of John Adams is available, as well as the "Familiar Letters" to and from his wife. It is unfortunate that similar correspondence by less dogmatic and unsparing critics of this episode should not have been preserved.

[1] Not so bad as the Virginia Tory who wrote: "Hancock is one of the greatest desperadoes living." — Hosmer's "Life of Samuel Adams," p. 311.

But all congressmen were glad enough to have Hancock furnish his coach and equipage when the first French Minister arrived to convey him in state from the ship to the hall where they were assembled. Henry Marchant of Rhode Island thought that "the most interesting interview that ever took place was that between the French plenipotentiary and John Hancock." He did not fail to observe that when he was formally received by Congress "the chairs of the President and the Minister were of equal size." — "France in the American Revolution," J. B. Perkins, p. 252.

CHAPTER XIII

IN THE SECOND CONTINENTAL CONGRESS

THE fellow pilgrims arrived in Philadelphia on the day that the Second Congress assembled, May 10, 1775, a few hours after the surrender of Ticonderoga, of which Hancock would not hear for eight days. Did he remember that it was also Dorothy Quincy's twenty-eighth birthday?[1] Doubtless there were numerous distractions in Carpenters' Hall. He met there men whose names were familiar in all the land, as distinguished in their several provinces as his own in Massachusetts: Franklin, Washington, Richard Henry Lee, Peyton Randolph, to be joined later by Patrick Henry, Clinton, Jay, Livingston, and others of like eminence. Hancock's fame had preceded him as the loser of the sloop "Liberty," and as the one wealthy aristocrat who had sacrificed much for the cause of the colonies, a leader and chairman of the Massachusetts Congress, the co-partner of Samuel Adams

[1] At this time his mansion was occupied by General Clinton, who had arrived with Howe and Burgoyne in May, 1775, and had taken up his residence in the Hancock house. During the next winter the 1750 British soldiers encamped in front of it took the fence for fire wood. — "Boston Common — Scenes from Four Centuries," Howe, p. 40.

in exclusion from royal clemency, and with him the object of pursuit in order to arrest by the king's officers. For these reasons and for the distinction of his personal presence, from which the elegance of his attire did not detract, he was a conspicuous figure in the Assembly. Not even Sam Adams in his new suit, about which he had so many scruples as to whether its cost should be defrayed by the Province, — to which he finally assented, — — not even the "Incendiary" himself was so noticeable as his companion. But Adams had no jealousy of Hancock's exterior brilliance; and when Randolph was called home to preside over the Virginia Legislature,[1] leaving vacant the presiding officer's chair, Adams was ready to nominate his colleague to the presidency of Congress, and with John Adams to solicit votes for him. His election on the sixteenth day of the session was considered a rebuke to George the Third and his Parliament, and as an indication of general sympathy with the Boston patriot who had forsaken the loyalist position to which he had been committed by political and social associations.[2] A great honor had been

[1] Not on account of sickness, as sometimes stated. See "Journals of Virginia House of Burgesses," 1773–1776, p. 174.

[2] The authentic record of his election, as distinguished from later additions, is found in the "Journal of Continental Congress," for May 24, 1775, II, 59.

On the second day of the session Hancock laid before Congress testimonials relative to the battle of Lexington and other papers referring to the course of events in Massachusetts. Guy Carleton Lee's "History of North America," VI, 120.

bestowed upon him in fitting recognition of his sacrifices to the cause of protest and revolt. Hitherto he had accepted promotion gracefully, if not as a matter of course in his own Province, but now he was embarrassed by the magnitude of the distinction conferred upon him, and his usual self-composure did not return until Benjamin Harrison had conducted him to the chair amidst general acclamation, saying as he left him there, "We will show Great Britain how much we value her proscriptions."

If Hancock had not already proved his ability as a parliamentarian neither of the Adamses would have risked his reputation as an adviser by advocating his election; but his experience and success as moderator in Boston town-meetings and as president of the Massachusetts Provincial Congress warranted his recommendation by his friends, as his reëlection by the Congress afterward was an endorsement of their advocacy.

The task before him was a severe test of his fitness, since it was no ordinary body over which he was called to preside. Men were in it who were of greater ability than himself, leaders in Provinces which had jealousies and prejudices; men of widely divergent views in politics, religion, and in regard to the attitude to be assumed toward the mother country, and directly opposed to his own and the Massachusetts delegation's holding. Even if there had been the semblance of harmony there was no

supreme authority vested in the assembly itself. It was doubtful whether or not their sense of oppression by England was equal to their affection for her; and independence did not seem to all to be the only means of securing their inherited rights. The old was better than the untried and dangerous new.[1] The main business of the majority was to consult on possibilities of consolidation, since refusal to trade with Great Britain was their only means of practical protest against its oppressive acts. They were merely deputies from twelve separate colonies, without authority to legislate for one another, without executive powers or officers, without credit to borrow money, or right to lay a tax, representing the chaotic opinions of four races, and hampered by the sentiments or instructions of their several constituencies. All that could keep centrifugal forces from scattering these twelve units was the pressure of royal encroachment without and the central attraction of freedom from British rule within. Even then indecision and

[1] The colonists' love of their mother country as an element in the struggle is well set forth by Bancroft in "History of U.S.," VII, 356. It is further illustrated by an address from Congress to the Lord Mayor and citizens of London in July, 1775: "A cruel war has at length been opened up against us, and whilst we purpose to defend ourselves like the descendants of Britons, we still have hope that the mediation of wise and good citizens, will at length prevail over despotism, and restore harmony and peace, on permanent principles, to an oppressed and divided empire." (Signed) "JOHN HANCOCK." — "Journals of Continental Congress," II, 17.

wavering prevailed for weeks. Conservatism ruled, and what progress was made was like that of cattle holding back against the downhill force of gravity; to many seeming a veritable *descensus averni* to a civil purgatory.

The chairman of this heterogeneous and non-commissioned assemblage had to deal fairly and courteously with men from all along the coast, whatever his own predilections were, and they were strong. The hesitation, timorousness, and sometimes the Tory bias of here one and there another must have ruffled the spirit of a man who, to clear out British invaders, could say, "Burn Boston and make John Hancock a pauper." He must have chafed inwardly when, after war had broken out, men were so blinded by the hope of reconciliation that no measure for the prosecution of hostilities could be carried unanimously until a second petition to the king had met with rebuff. His own delegation even could not urge immediate and drastic action because the people of Massachusetts were regarded by the lower colonies as radicals in politics and fanatics in religion.[1] Yet there was a growing admiration of their conduct under the tyranny of the Port Bill and of their

[1] The influences that made for isolation and separatism can be understood when it is remembered that Boston was four days from New York and seven from Philadelphia in 1765. Captain Derby was only twenty-seven days in carrying the news of the Lexington fight to England in the "Quero" schooner of sixty-two tons burden.

bravery at Lexington and Concord. It was no slight responsibility for the President to appoint acceptable committees on so important matters as the declaration of independence, articles of confederation, and a treaty with France. Whoever may have advised, he himself had to bear the inevitable censure from some sources of criticism. Wisdom in the chair or behind it must have dictated the choice of Jefferson, John Adams, Franklin, Roger Sherman, and Livingston to formulate the Declaration. Jefferson at the head of this committee had succeeded Peyton Randolph, being sent to rival and supplant Richard Henry Lee, who was not agreeable to most of his colleagues from Virginia, although a masterly orator and debater and the mover of the Declaration. But Jefferson, who seldom opened his lips in Congress, held a facile pen; and John Adams, who was next on the committee, would not undertake to compose the document, having no opinion of his own literary style.[1] Accordingly Jefferson drew up the Declaration and reported it to the committee, two of whom, Adams and Franklin, suggested a few changes, and Congress cut out about a quarter of it, including the condemnation of negro slavery, obliterating, as Adams thought, the best of it and leaving objectionable portions. The committees on articles of confedera-

[1] Adams's spirited account of the exchange of civilities on this matter between himself and Jefferson may be found in his "Works," II, 514.

tion, and on the treaty with France were equally well chosen; Samuel Adams being the principal member of the first, and Franklin of the second.[1]

There were other committees to appoint, and debates to be listened to with unruffled mien; for example, on the question of building an American fleet, which must have appealed to Hancock, as chairman of the committee on naval armament, whose ships were rotting at his own wharf, blockaded by British men-of-war. Did he keep his countenance when a member exclaimed, "It is the maddest idea in the world; we should have to mortgage the whole Continent to do it. Two swift sailing vessels for gaining intelligence are sufficient."

Then on Monday, September 25, 1775, there was a debate which showed that methods of getting rich in war-time were not the invention of contractors in the Civil and Spanish wars of later date. There was "an uneasiness among some of the members concerning a contract with Willing and Morris for powder by which that firm would make a clear profit of twelve thousand pounds at least." Livingston said he would never vote to ratify the contract. Willing, a member of Congress, said

[1] Hancock's famous signature, "so plain that George the Third may read it without spectacles," stood alone for a month, and besides the Secretary's was the only name appended to the Declaration when copies were sent to the several colonial Assemblies. Congress withheld all other signatures as they were dangerous evidences of treason to the home government, involving peril of the gallows.

he would leave it to his partner to explain. Johnson said a hundred tons were needed, and Congress was to pay the first cost only. Zubly remarked sarcastically, "We are highly favored; fourteen pounds a barrel we are to give, if we get the powder, — and the same if we don't get it. Persons enough will supply the powder at fifteen pounds and run all risks."[1] Dyer observed, "There are not ten men in my colony with so much money as will be made, clear, by this contract;" and Ross replied, "What has this to do with the present debate, whether Connecticut men are worth so much or no: there are no men there whose capital or credit is equal to such contracts."

And John Hancock, bland and quiet as became his position as president of Congress, could recall an order given three years before by himself in apprehensive times for "forty half-barrels of Powder — let it be good." His capital and credit were equal to any army contract, whose profits might have reimbursed him for losses at the beginning of hostilities. The record shows that he spoke but once in these September days. When Lynch

[1] In the general scarcity of arms and ammunition Franklin, in jest or soberness, at one time proposed a return to aboriginal bows and arrows. Other patterns of this weapon had won famous battles from the dawn of history, and could outshoot the colonial musket. Even the Stockbridge Indians, hanging around the Cambridge camp, picked off a few sentries with arrows on their own account, as the yeoman ancestors of these sentries had drawn strong bows against the French at Crécy and Agincourt.

inquired whether Captain Dean, whose vessel was taken at Block Island, was not carrying supplies to the enemy, and Lee thought such conduct "detestable parricide," Hancock remarked: "Dean belongs to Boston; he came from the West Indies, and was seized here and released; he loaded with flour and went out." He did not spare a Boston man when he was suspected of giving aid and comfort to the British.

And so the debates went on, with acrimony often, with appeals for unanimity, concession, and compromise. As Livingston said, "We are between hawk and buzzard; we puzzle ourselves between the commercial and warlike opposition." The battle between these forces had to be fought out before the greater war with Great Britain. As for Hancock himself, he had decided the conflict between his commercial interests and liberty long before he came to the Congress: therefore he must have watched with interest if not impatience the slow conversion of one deputy after another to the side of freedom.[1] They were not all merchants and importers, very few in fact; but all were

[1] The transition from demanding reform legislation by Parliament to insisting upon independence was rapid during the siege of Boston in 1775, and was accompanied by a total misapprehension of American sentiment by the British ministry. As an example of an Englishman's opinion of colonial devotion to the cause of freedom the historian Gibbon's letter to Lord Eliot may be cited: "As it is the season for sowing Indian corn, the chief subsistence of New Englanders, they must soon disperse."

affected by commerce in a day when agriculture as a means of prosperity was lying far inland as an undeveloped source of wealth. Foreign trade was the chief reliance of the seaboard, on which the inland counties depended as well as the tide-water towns. Of such foreign trade Hancock was the principal representative; another reason why he should preside over the confederated council.

There was another issue made paramount for a while which must have vexed the soul of an advanced patriot like Hancock. What proved to be a "measure of imbecility," a second petition to the king, clogged for a time every effort of Congress toward ultimate independence. A certain contingent caused motions to be made and tedious debates for appointing committees to draw up declarations of the causes, motives, and objects of taking up arms; all to delay the declaration of independence. Meantime a New England army was waiting before Boston for countenance, encouragement, acceptance, arms, pay, and even clothing; while their officers were sending letters to the Massachusetts delegation urging in pathetic terms the impossibility of keeping the militia together without the assistance of Congress. Jealousy in this body bristled in every direction; a southern party against a northern, a royalist against a patriot. The loyalist was constantly demanding one more appeal to the king's sense of justice, which some believed was dimmed by the

unwisdom of favorite counsellors. When Jay's motion, seconded by Dickinson, was at length passed, "to present a humble and dutiful petition to His Majesty for the promotion of a most desirable reconciliation," Congress weakened the spirit of resolution to resist which was making for independence. This gave the king time to collect and forward his forces; and the several colonies in a half-hearted way were directed to prepare for a doubtful alternative, as it was "very uncertain whether their earnest endeavors to accommodate the unhappy differences between Great Britain and the colonies by conciliatory measures would be successful." This hesitancy, delay, and parleying could not have been otherwise than exasperating to a determined chairman, who was nevertheless obliged to preserve a neutral attitude during the protracted discussion.

There was one of the above jealousies, however, which proved too much for Hancock's equanimity. From composite motives the southern colonies had aspired to furnish a commander-in-chief for the northern forces already in the field — possibly because the one man recognized by every one as equal to the situation was a Virginian. General Artemas Ward, who was holding chief command, was unfitted by age for the position; and Joseph Warren explained to Samuel Adams that a recent resolve of the Provincial Congress to assume the direction of the army was to be understood as an

intimation to the Continental Congress to appoint a Generalissimo. When this proposition was discussed in Philadelphia Hancock was among the candidates. His knowledge of military affairs was limited to tactics sufficient to lead his company about the streets as an escort to the provincial governors, or in the field exercises of a general training day. To suppose that he could fill a post of greater authority was an instance of a very common delusion, namely, that one is peculiarly qualified for something he is least fitted for. *Ne sutor supra crepidam* is a precept that is by no means applicable to a cobbler alone in his aspirations toward a field of higher criticism. Moreover, Hancock had already been elevated to as supreme a height as was possible to an American citizen before the United States could offer him their presidency. If the office of commander-in-chief had pointed to a military dictatorship beyond a crowd of raw recruits it might have been more alluring; but it did not. Nevertheless, the President of Congress was disappointed that he was not nominated for the position, and chagrined that his friend and colleague John Adams proposed a Virginian, and that Samuel Adams seconded the nomination.

In his own account of the election John Adams said that "Washington was in the minds of so many of the stanchest members that nothing could be done short of conceding to them. Mr. Hancock

himself had an ambition to be appointed commander-in-chief. Whether he thought an election a compliment due him, and intended to have the honor of declining it, or whether he would have accepted it, I know not. To the compliment he had some pretensions, for at that time his exertions, sacrifices, and general merits in the cause of his country had been incomparably greater than those of Colonel Washington. But the delicacy of his health, and his entire want of experience in actual service, though an excellent militia officer, were decisive objections to him in my mind. In canvassing this subject out of doors, I found too that even among the delegates of Virginia there were difficulties. The apostolical reasonings among themselves, which should be greatest, were not less energetic among the saints of the ancient dominion than they were among us of New England. In several conversations I found more than one cool about the appointment of Washington, and particularly Mr. Pendleton was very full and clear against it."

After conferring with Samuel Adams, who said nothing, he made a short speech on the distresses of the army, the danger of its dissolution, the anxiety of the people, and closed with a motion for "the adoption of the army at Cambridge, and that a gentleman from Virginia be appointed Commander-in-Chief, whose skill, experience as an officer, independent fortune, great talents, and excellent character would command the approba-

tion of all America, and unite the exertions of all the Colonies better than any other person in the Union. Mr. Washington, who happened to sit near the door, as soon as he heard me allude to him, from his usual modesty darted into the library-room. Mr. Hancock, who was our President, — which gave me an opportunity to observe his countenance while I was speaking on the state of Colonies, the army at Cambridge, and the enemy, — heard me with visible pleasure; but when I came to describe Washington for the commander, I never remarked a more sudden and striking change of countenance. Mortification and resentment were expressed as forcibly as his face could exhibit them. Mr. Samuel Adams seconded the motion, and that did not soften the President's physiognomy at all."

Whatever feeling Hancock may have betrayed when he was surprised by his colleagues' advocacy of a Virginian, he had so far recovered the next day as to write to Elbridge Gerry that Washington was "a fine man." Austin, in his "Life of Gerry," adds that neither Hancock nor General Ward was ever afterward very cordial to Washington.[1] The fondness of Hancock for popularity and consequent advancement was his principal weakness, which, like vanity, another of his foibles, is so common that

[1] "Hancock was known to cherish military ambitions, and he viewed the nomination to the command of the army as a reward due to himself." — "Correspondence and Journals of Samuel Blackley," III, 275.

it may be called one of the venial faults, if not a motive to exertion in the lack of nobler incitements. It certainly tends to promote kindly treatment of all who may be useful upon occasion, and is better than some other forms of ambition. Yet no one would say that Hancock would be likely to make all the sacrifices that he did merely for the rewards that the patriot party had it in their power to confer. Up to the declaration of independence and even later those who were looking for political preferment would side with the crown, which would have made it more profitable for Adams and Hancock to abandon a doubtful alliance than to become entangled in it. It would have been a royal economy to purchase their neutrality at any price, if it could have been bought. Therefore while Hancock was undoubtedly gratified by popular adulation and promotion, his love of these tokens of respect should not be made to obscure deeper and better springs of devotion to a noble cause. These were shown, when on the 10th of July he wrote Washington: "I must beg the favor that you will reserve some berth for me, in such department as you may judge proper; for I am determined to act under you, if it be to take a firelock and join the ranks as a volunteer." He may have been disappointed, as he had reason to be chagrined, by the desertion of his colleagues, with whatever good reason on their part, but this humble offer of service was sincere, unreserved,

and unconditional. Washington's reply, after eleven days, was courteous but not encouraging: —

"I am particularly to acknowledge that part of your favor of the 10th instant, wherein you do me the honor of determining to join the army under my command. I need certainly to make no professions of the pleasure I shall have in seeing you. At the same time I have to regret, that so little is in my power to offer to Colonel Hancock's merits, and worth his acceptance. I shall be happy in every opportunity to show the regard and esteem with which

"I am, Sir, your most obedient and very humble servant."

A word should be added with regard to the way that Washington took his nomination to the position of Commander-in-Chief. After speaking of Hancock's momentary discomfiture and Washington's surprise, John Adams records that "It was on a succeeding day that he was formally nominated, as I remember by Thomas Johnson of Maryland." After the first ballot it was found that he was unanimously elected, and on the morning of the next day it fell to Hancock as President to communicate to him officially and verbally the notice of his election. He signified his acceptance in a short and appropriate reply. In it his modesty was equalled by his generosity in refusing the pay of $500 per month which had been voted, and accepting remuneration for his expenses only.

On the 19th of June, two months after the battle of Lexington and Concord, Hancock signed Washington's commission to be General and Commander-in-Chief of the army of the United Colonies.

On his way to Cambridge to take charge of the troops he wrote Hancock from New York a week later that by the advice of many members of Congress who judged it necessary that he should avail himself of information, he had taken the liberty to open a letter in the hands of a messenger to Congress, and had learned particulars of the battle of Bunker's Hill. In a second letter to the President, written as it happened on the same day that Hancock was writing to solicit service under him, Washington informs Congress of his arrival in Cambridge on July 3, after a fatiguing journey of seventeen days, "retarded by necessary attention to the successive civilities which accompanied me in my whole route." Massachusetts sent two men to the State border at Springfield to provide honorable escort throughout the hundred miles to Cambridge, and to receive bills for entertainment at the inns. General Ward gave orders for the honorable reception of the Commander-in-Chief, "without, however, any expenditure of powder." They had other uses for an article of which they were deplorably short, as Washington found upon his arrival.[1] Ten days later he sent another letter to President Hancock in which he proposed "to divide the army into three divisions: at the head of each will be a general officer"; but there is no

[1] On Sunday, July 2, at 2 P.M. Lt. Baker's "Itinerary of Washington," p. 8. An American spy wrote on September 25: "I heard Mr. Hancock Say the very day he came from Congress that we

intimation that the President of Congress was contemplated for one of these positions. On the next day, and with the above letter, he forwarded to "Colonel Hancock" the one already cited, acknowledging his offer of services, but politely declining them. And on the 4th of August, in another communication to the President, he is "much honored by the confidence reposed in him of appointing the several officers recommended in mine of the 10th ultimo. and shall endeavor to select such persons as are best qualified to fill these important posts." By this time Hancock must have concluded that his chances of military service and promotion were few. He may have consoled himself with the reflection that his parliamentary gifts were greater than most men's, and that his presidency of Congress was next in distinction if not equal to the Commander-in-Chief's position, since this advisory body was constantly dictating military affairs.

While these letters were passing between the two a minor tribute was paid Hancock by the General Assembly of Massachusetts, which on the 19th of July had succeeded to the third and last Provincial Congress, the presidency of which he had continued to hold while in Philadelphia. Elected as

had more Powder on the Road coming to the Camp than we could Expend in one twelve months, this was believed by all, coming from Hancock. . . . Our Chiefs say it is Justifiable for such reports when all is at Stake and the Courage of the Soldiers must be kept up high by some means or other." — Belcher's "First Civil War," 1, 207.

one of the representatives from Suffolk County, he was immediately chosen by the Assembly as one of eighteen councillors, his own name heading the list. This board was to act as an upper house of the Legislature and also as an executive power, there being as yet no governor. The duties of this body furnished employment for the returned congressmen, who were members of it, throughout the August recess until the 24th of the month. Meantime during the summer and fall President Hancock was writing to colonial legislatures and to army officers letters in which no note of his disappointment appears, and that were a credit to his patriotism and sympathy; as for example one to General Schuyler in his time of discouragement, and the following official communications, which are a contrast to his epistles as a lover.[1]

On the 4th of June, he wrote to "The Hon'ble Assembly of Massachusetts Bay":—

"Our affairs are hastening fast to a Crisis; and the approaching Campaign will, in all probability, determine forever the Fate of America.

"Such is the unrelenting Spirit which possesses the Tyrant of Britain and his Parliament, that they have left no Measure unassayed that had a Tendency to accomplish our Destruction. Not contented with having lined our Coasts with Ships of War, to starve us into a surrender of our Liberties, to prevent us from being supplied with arms and ammunition, they are now about to pour in a Num-

[1] His letters to army officers may be seen in the "St. Clair Papers," 2 vols., Cincinnati, 1882.

ber of foreign Troops, who from their Want of Countries, & their Feelings of Sympathy which frequently bind together the different parts of the same Empire, will be likely to do the business of their Masters, without Remorse or Compunction."

After mentioning the danger from Canada and the Indians he goes on to say: —

"In short, on your exertions at this critical Period, together with those of other Colonies in the Common Cause, the salvation of America evidently depends. Our Colony, I am persuaded will not be behindhand. Let us therefore exert every Nerve to distinguish ourselves. I entreat you to quicken your Preparations, and to stimulate the good people of our Government; and there is no Danger, notwithstanding the mighty Armament with which we are threatened, but they will be lead on to Victory, to Liberty and to Happiness." [1]

The following letter to the Convention of New Jersey is of similar import and interest: —

"PHILADELPHIA, July 16th, 1776.

"GENTLEMEN,

"Since I had the Honour of addressing on the fourth of June, at which Time I transmitted sundry Resolves of Congress requesting you to call forth your Militia, our Affairs have assumed a much more serious Complexion. If we turn our attention towards the Northern Department, we behold an Army reduced by Sickness, and obliged to flee before an Enemy of vastly superior Force. If we cast our eyes to Head-Quarters, we see the British Army reinforced under Lord Howe, and ready to strike a Blow, which may be attended with the most fatal Consequences, if not timely resisted. The situation of our Country at this Season, calls

[1] "Mass. State Archives," Ms. vol. 195, p. 28.

therefore for all the Vigour and Wisdom among us; and if we do not mean to desert her at this alarming Crisis, it is high Time to rouse every Spark of Virtue; and forgetting all inferior Considerations, to exert ourselves in a Manner becoming Freemen.

"The Intelligence received this Day from General Washington, points out the absolute, the indispensible Necessity of sending forward all the Troops that can possibly be collected, to strengthen both the Army in New York, and that on this side of Canada. I do therefore, once more, in the Name, and by the Authority of Congress, beseech and request you, — as you regard the Liberties of your Country, and the Happiness of Posterity; and as you stand engaged by the most solemn Ties of Honour to support the Common Cause — to strain every Nerve to send forward your Militia, agreeably to the former Requisitions of Congress. This is a step of such infinite Moment, that, in all Human Probability, it will be the Salvation of America — and as it is the only effectual Step, that can possibly be taken at this Juncture, you will suffer me again most ardently to entreat your speedy Compliance with it.

"In short, the Critical Period has arrived, that will seal the Fate, not only of ourselves, but of Posterity. Whether they shall arise the generous Heirs of Freedom, or the dastardly Slaves of imperious Task-Masters, it is now in your Power to determine. And as Freemen, I am sure, you will not hesitate about the Choice.

"I have the Honour to be
"Gentlemen
"Your most obed't
"very hble Ser't
"John Hancock Presid't."[1]

[1] From Ms. in the Dreer Collection of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. By the courtesy of the Librarian, Mr. John W. Jordan.

This may serve as an example of his interest in the welfare of the army: —

"PHILADELPHIA, June 21, 1776.

"I have only Time to observe in general that it is totally impossible the American Troops should be on a respectable Footing; or that they should render any espetial Services to their Country, unless the United Colonies on their Part, will take Care to have them well appointed and equipped with every Thing necessary for an Army. In this view of the Matter, the enclosed Resolve, respecting the Mode of providing proper Clothing for our Troops, is most Certainly of the greatest importance, and I make no Doubt will appear in the same Light to you and claim your immediate and closest Attention." [1]

[1] "Mass. State Archives," Ms. vol. 195, p. 45. Other letters on pp. 39, 41, 52, 55, 73, 111, 231. On Oct. 9 he wrote to six colonies, and to four Dec. 25.

CHAPTER XIV

A WEDDING

Dorothy Quincy did not go back to Boston after the Concord and Lexington fight, despite her assertion that she was not yet under her lover's control. He could safely leave the wilful girl to the management of a still more determined woman, who had her own method of persuading the younger one that it was much better to continue their flight from the beleaguered town of Boston. They had not been out of Lexington three weeks when the maiden's father, whom she wished to visit, had left Boston, and from Lancaster, May 11, wrote to his son that "Yr sister Dolly with Mrs. Hancock came from Shirley to y'r Bro. Greenleef's and dined and proceeded to Worcester, where Col. H. and Mr. A. were on their way. This was ten days before I got hither, so that I missed seeing them. As I hear, she proceded with Mr. H. to Fairfield. I don't expect to see her till peaceable times are restored."

The Burrs were an ancient Massachusetts family, a branch of which had drifted from the Bay down into Fairfield, Connecticut. Thaddeus Burr was the occupant of the old homestead for which aunt

Lydia Hancock headed with Dorothy Quincy in charge, and her nephew John conveniently on the way. Alone she appears to have been equal to the task of personally conducting the spirited and vivacious Dorothy into the staid Connecticut household. There Hancock could leave his fiancée, with the comforting assurance that she was in safe hands where he could find her when his congressional duties should be sufficiently relaxed to permit a temporary absence from Philadelphia. He did not wait to reach that city before he wrote the letter of May 7 from New York, describing his journey and flattering reception.[1] A month afterward he wrote from Philadelphia a letter by which it appears that Dorothy was not so faithful a correspondent as he was, and perhaps not so ardent a lover.

"My Dr Dolly: — I am almost prevailed on to think that my letters to my Aunt & you are not read, for I cannot obtain a reply, I have ask'd million questions & not an answer to one, I beg'd you to let me know what things my Aunt wanted & you, and many other matters I wanted to know, but not one word in answer. I Really Take it extreme unkind, pray my Dr. use not so much Ceremony and Reservedness, why can't you use freedom in writing, be not afraid of me, I want long Letters. I am glad the little things I sent you were agreeable. Why did you not write me of the top of the Umbrella. I am so sorry it was spoiled, but I will send you another by my Express wch will go in a few days. How did my Aunt like her gown, & do let me know if the Stockings suited her; she had better send a pattern

[1] See p. 171.

shoe and stocking, I warrant I will suit her. The Inclosed letter for your Father you will read, & seal and forward him, you will observe I mention in it your writing your Sister Katy about a few necessaries for Katy Sewall, what you think Right let her have & Roy James, & this only between you and I; do write your Father I should be glad to hear from him, & I beg, my dear Dolly, you will write me often & long letters, I will forgive the past if you will mend in the future. Do ask my Aunt to make up and send me a Watch String, & do you make up another & send me, I wear them out fast. I want some little thing of your doing.

"Remember me to all Friends with you as if Nam'd. I am call'd upon and must obey.

"I have sent you by Docr Church in a paper Box Directed to you the following things, for your acceptance & which I do insist you wear, if you do not, I shall think the Donor is the objection:—

"2 pair white silk 4 pair white thread stockings which I think will fit you 1 pr. Black Satin shoes, 1 pr. Black Calem Do. the other shall be sent when done 1 very pretty light Hat 1 neat Airy Summer Cloak (I ask Docr. Church) 2 caps 1 Fann.

"I wish these may please you, I shall be gratified if they do, pray write me, I will attend to all your Commands.

"Adieu my Dr Girl, and believe me with great Esteem & Affection

"Yours without Reserve

"John Hancock."[1]

"Remember me to Katy Brackett."

It is too evident that despite the lover's entreaties, supplemented by hosiery, hat, and cloak, Dorothy Quincy was so sadly in arrears in the matter of letter-writing that out of regard to her loyalty

[1] "New England Magazine," Old Series, xii, 532.

to her prospective husband some search ought to be made for a woman's reason which will explain such neglect, in part at least.

In the house where she was staying was born on November 6, 1756, a son to Aaron Burr and Esther his wife, who was a daughter of Reverend Jonathan Edwards, the most distinguished theologian and terrific preacher of his generation; and for a short period before his death President of Princeton College. Young Aaron Burr inherited intellectual gifts that were a credit to his illustrious ancestry, and possessed moreover a personal fascination equalled only by his grandfather's fearful attraction when delivering one of his lurid sermons. For a while the grandson pursued the study of divinity, but a revolt from Calvinistic dogmatism ended in legal studies and practice. He had been three years out of college, a youth of nineteen, when he appeared one summer day at the old homestead, both of his parents having died in his childhood. Much history has descended with his name, but it is a uniform tradition that, — what is of chief consequence here, — his attractions were well-nigh irresistible by women. An equally well-attested tradition declares that Dorothy Quincy was by no means insensible to his charms of appearance and conversation.

Aunt Lydia soon became alarmed for the prospects of her nephew-congressman by the daily presence in the house of this winsome and brilliant

student of theology and law, whose enchantments may have been past her matronly and aged understanding — or they may not, but were so evident that some drastic policy became imperative for the safe-keeping of her charge. Plainly, she did not disclose the situation to John, since amid all his complaints and surmisings in such letters as have survived there is no hint of a rival's advantageous propinquity in the household where Dorothy was living. It is not certain how long she was exposed to the hypnotic influences of a young man ten years her junior; but it is on record that during the recess of Congress, from August 1 to September 5, its president claimed the willing or reluctant betrothed as his own, and they were married on the 28th day of August, 1775, as was duly chronicled in the "New York Gazette" of September 4:—

"This evening was married at the seat of Thaddeus Burr, Esq., at Fairfield Conn., by the Reverend Mr. Eliot, the Hon. John Hancock Esq., President of the Continental Congress, to Miss Dorothy Quincy, daughter of Edmund Quincy Esq. of Boston. Florus informs us that 'in the second Punic war, when Hannibal besieged Rome and was very near making himself master of it, a field upon which part of his army lay, was offered for sale, and was immediately purchased by a Roman, in a strong assurance that the Roman valor and courage would soon raise the siege.' Equal to the conduct of that illustrious citizen was the marriage of the Honorable John Hancock Esq., who, with his amiable lady has paid as great a compliment to American valor, and discovered equal patriotism, by marrying now

while all the colonies are as much convulsed as Rome when Hannibal was at her gates."[1]

No doubt Hancock appreciated the compliment to his confidence in American valor by some newspaper Florus, and at the same time he may also have had his own apprehensions about the wisdom of a Fabian policy in delaying his marriage much longer, — in which Aunt Lydia was sure to agree with him. Dolly, too, might have had her compensations in the fact that she had wedded a man of wealth and exalted position, with the accessories of good looks, manners, and breeding. Settled in a boarding-house in Philadelphia with other people from Massachusetts, she won the reputation of a devoted wife.[2] John Adams, writing to his wife on November 4, says: —

"Two pair of colors belonging to the Seventh Regiment, were brought here last night from Chambly, and hung up in Mrs. Hancock's chamber with great splendor and elegance. The lady sends her compliments and good wishes. Among a hundred men, almost, at this house, she lives and behaves

[1] Another contemporary sheet had his portrait as a frontispiece; and John Eliot is moved to write to Jeremy Belknap: "It is said that the President of our Continental Congress is a person of surpassing eloquence, a fine writer, argumentative, cool, as may be seen in the addresses of Congress, all which were penned by him; that he hath lately married one of the most accomplished ladies on the Continent, who has bro't him a great addition to his paternal fortune." — "Belknap Papers," IV, 125. An instance of the untrustworthiness of some examples of contemporary report.

[2] The first weeks at Philadelphia were occupied in packing up officers' commissions and trimming the rough edges of new bills of credit. — "Magazine of American History," June, 1888.

with modest decency, dignity and discretion, I assure you. Her behavior is easy and genteel. She avoids talking upon politics. In large and mixed companies she is totally silent, as a lady ought to be. But whether her eyes are so penetrating, and her attention so quick to the words, looks gestures sentiments &c of the company as yours would be, saucy as you are in this way, I won't say."

Probably Abigail Adams understood her husband well enough to believe that this was an intended compliment to herself, and that he was immune against other attractions than her own.

By spring the Hancocks took a house from which the President of Congress sent an invitation to the Commander-in-Chief on the 16th of May, 1776, to make his home with them on the occasion of his visit to Philadelphia to consult with Congress about the ensuing campaign, where he was to be joined by Mrs. Washington:—

"I reside in an airy open part of the city, in Arch street and Fourth street. Your favor of the 20th inst. I received this morning and cannot help expressing the great pleasure it would afford Mrs. Hancock and myself to have the happiness of accommodating you during your stay in this city. As the house I live in is large and roomy, it will be entirely in Your power to live in that manner you should wish. Mrs. Washington will be as retired as she pleases, while under inoculation, and Mrs. Hancock will esteem it an honour to have Mrs. Washington inoculated in her house; and as I am informed Mr. Randolph has not any lady about his house to take the necessary care of Mrs. Washington, I flatter myself she will be as well attended in my family.

"In short, sir, I must take the freedom to repeat my wish,

that You will be pleased to condescend to dwell under my roof. I assure you, sir, I will do all in my power to render your stay agreeable, and my house shall be entirely at your disposal. I must, however, submit this to your determination and only add that you will peculiarly gratify Mrs. H. and myself, in affording me an opportunity of convincing of this truth, that I am, with every sentiment of regard for you, and your connections, and with much esteem, dear sir,

"Your faithful and most obedient humble servant.

"JOHN HANCOCK."

In his reply of May 20 to the official letter which accompanied this invitation Washington expressed his gratitude to Congress "for their kind attention to the means which they think may be conducive to my health, and with particular thanks to you for the politeness of your invitation to your house, I conclude, dear sir, Your most obedient, etc." There is no indication that he accepted Hancock's offer of hospitality. Possibly the non-acceptance was the cause of the following note from the President of Congress soon after the arrival of Washington in Philadelphia: —

"I am extremely sorry it is not in my power to wait on you in person, to execute the commands of Congress. But being deprived of that pleasure by a severe fit of the gout, I am under the necessity of taking this method to acquaint you, that the Congress have directed me in their name to make the thanks of that body to you, for the unremitted attention you have paid to your important trust, and in particular for the assistance they have derived from your military knowledge and experience, in adopting the best plans for the defence of the United Colonies."

In this note also there is evidence that Washington did not accept Hancock's proffered hospitality. Nor was this the only occasion on which the convenient gout served the latter's sense of what was due him. He had been profuse in his cordial tender of entertainment to one who occupied a position which he had coveted: the recognition of his offer was courteous but almost curt in response to the somewhat effusive but evidently genuine initiative of Hancock. At this distance a sudden recurrence of his malady seems excusable, if not natural.

On the 24th of August it became the duty of the President of Congress to write the Commander-in-Chief in commendation of his action in the matter of Lord Drummond's proposal of a plan of reconciliation between Great Britain and the colonies, which Washington had promptly declined to receive from a man who was violating his parole, as he considered.

"Sir,

"The late conduct of Lord Drummond is as extraordinary, as his motives are dark and mysterious. To judge the most favorably of his intentions, it should seem, that an overweening vanity has betrayed him into a criminal breach of honor. But whether his views were upright, or intended only to mislead and deceive, cannot at present be a matter of any importance. In the meantime I have the pleasure to acquaint you, that Congress highly approve the manner in which you have checked the officious and intemperate zeal of his Lordship. Whether his designs were hostile or

friendly, he equally merited the reproof you gave him, and I hope for the future he will be convinced, that it is highly imprudent to attract the attention of the public to a character, which will only pass without censure when it passes without notice. . . . I have the honor to be, etc.

"JOHN HANCOCK." [1]

It may be admitted that Hancock succeeded in separating his official duty from his personal inclinations. He could not fail to have the Commander-in-Chief often in his thoughts, as that dignitary was frequently the subject of discussion in Congress. In communicating the sentiments of that body he allowed no note of personal feeling to color the expression of its opinions or will. If in the privacy of his fireside the attitude of General Washington was sometimes discussed, the two most concerned were not likely to let their neighbors have the opportunity to repeat anything to the detriment of the man who was having abuse enough from the envious and ambitious, from pretended friends and open enemies.

[1] The correspondence on the Lord Drummond proposition will be found in Sparks' edition of "Washington's Writings," III, 525. Also some of the letters in this chapter under their dates. The editor made them conform to modern standards of spelling and punctuation.

"The letters of John Hancock are not in the collection of Letters of the Presidents of Congress." — "Calendar of the Correspondence of George Washington with the Continental Congress," I, 7. Many of them are in the keeping of the historical societies of Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts, in the Archives of the latter state, and in private hands. If collected they would furnish illuminating comment on the Revolutionary period.

CHAPTER XV

PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

COINCIDENT with the declaration of independence a movement was started for the confederation of the colonies. To accomplish even a loose connection between separate and jarring states was a slower matter than to get them to declare themselves sundered from Great Britain.[1] Each colony was glad of the company of the others in the chorus of protest and assertion, but it meant that the freedom was for each one personally and individually as a member of a group. As a group, united by nothing stronger than common consent, there was little or no authority over any particular member of it. They all had just thrown off the control of one king: they were in no haste to have another, whether congress or president. At the same time, the weakness and the danger of disunion to these separate "States," as they began to call themselves, was growing more apparent every day; but it was long before needful conces-

[1] As against these plans of confederation, alternative propositions for the continuance of union with Great Britain were frequently brought forward, of which Galloway's was an example. It is to be seen in the "Journal of Continental Congress," II, 44.

sions to the idea of federation could be obtained, and longer still before it was cordially accepted. States rights, chartered, inherent, and immanent, were the materials out of which the fabric of a nation was to be built, and the incongruous stones and timbers were not to be assembled in a day; nor have their distinctive peculiarities been entirely lost after a century and a third. It is sometimes forgotten how much longer the thought of separatism and individualism prevailed throughout the colonial period than has that of union in the national period. Thirty-three years are yet to pass before the last period will equal the first; but it would take more than one decade to eradicate the political theories and habits to which the nation has become accustomed in one hundred and thirty-six years. The same was truer of a people whose notions of local rights had been undisturbed for one hundred and sixty-nine years from the first permanent settlement in Virginia in 1607, or for one hundred and fifty-six years in Massachusetts, with corresponding periods in other colonies.

To this new plan of confederation Congress devoted its attention in 1777; with the greater courage because the clouds over the army were clearing and the hopes of the people were reviving. Some, to be sure, saw in a final victory freedom chiefly for their own commonwealth to pursue its sectional schemes, recalling the evil proverb for the fate of the hindmost. In the main, however, Con-

gress had been a school for mutual instruction, opening blind eyes to unsuspected or unadmitted excellencies in others; teaching also the necessity of daily yielding something to the common welfare and to the opinion of the greater number. Those who had been learners in this school of political science went home to teach the people, and to turn public opinion out of the channels in which it had run for a century and a half; since back to the people the question of confederation, like that of independence, was to be referred for ultimate decision. Some of the principalities had already been framing new governments to fit the new conditions of entire self-government; now they were to be asked what they were willing to contribute toward the unity of all. It was a new proposition; regarded with suspicion and approached with reluctance. It was not until they realized that their separation from Great Britain and their isolation from each other debarred them from a place among the nations that the colonies saw the necessity of some sort of alliance among themselves.

In addition to their jealousy of one another the States grew more suspicious of Congress as the war elicited acts which were interpreted as looking toward imperialism, of which the direction of campaigns, and a standing committee of five to hear appeals in prize cases were instances. Some States insisted on having a voice in privateering limitations, and all of them were ready to send embarrass-

ing instructions to their deputies at every turn in affairs. All this diversity of opinion in Congress, and considerable officious ignorance outside, made Hancock's presidency more trying than that of later chairmen because grounds of difference were more radical than they now are after the existence of the nation under constitutional legislation for a century and a third.[1]

A further annoyance to the President of Congress arose from its growing inefficiency through withdrawal of its ablest members into missions abroad or governorships in their respective States. This depletion paralleled the short terms of service in the army, which would have ruined the American cause by New Year's day of 1777 if Washington's crossing the Delaware on Christmas night and the battle of Trenton the next day had not turned the tide of affairs at its lowest ebb, and kept homesick and heartsick troops from abandoning the contest. Congressmen went home for a different reason, especially when State elections were approaching, or sailed for foreign parts where their services might be needed. In both cases their experience was missed in Congress, and their absence was not made good by new members. Twelve out of the thirteen who drew up the plan of confederation had left when the debate on it

[1] "In the midst of all this complicated committee system was the President of Congress himself, the most overworked of them all." — Van Tyne, "American Revolution," p. 190.

began; and even Samuel Adams, the thirteenth, was absent when the articles were adopted. Newly appointed delegates brought their provincial antipathies with them, which they often mistook for a patriotism that their predecessors had lost in the abrasions of Congress and Philadelphia hospitality, but which many of the earlier ones had by no means thrown off. Benjamin Harrison compared Yankees in Congress to the Grand Turk in his dominion, and Rutledge dreaded their overruling influence in council: to which John Adams retorted: "The dons, the bashaws, the grandees, the sachems, the nabobs, call them by what name you please, sigh, groan, fret, and sometimes stamp and foam and curse, but all in vain."

This exchange of amenities demanded a presiding officer of some tact and great urbanity to keep the fathers of the republic from running into parliamentary riot. Small States feared the large, whose territory stretched to the Pacific. The Wyoming valley was a bone between Connecticut and Pennsylvania; the Green Mountain pastures another between New York and New Hampshire; and Vermont, asking admittance as an independent State, made New York and New England bristle and growl. Lafayette thought that parties in Congress hated one another as much as they hated the enemy; and Washington wrote that "Congress is rent by Party; business of personal concernment withdrawing attention from matters

of great national moment." Sometimes not more than twelve members were in attendance.

Hancock was a man of too large commercial and political experience to look down upon the House from his chair in his judicial capacity and not understand the causes of bickering and distrust. If the original members could have kept together there would have been better hope of eventual harmony through acquaintance and discussion. Instead, each session brought new men to thresh over the chaff that had been sufficiently pounded before their arrival. Nothing could be more wearying to a chairman or require more patience. Then there were questions about proportionate influence, privilege, and representation in the new government. Deputies had to contend for these upon the demand of their constituencies; how many votes each State should have, and what share of funds it should contribute. Franklin doubted whether the whale would swallow Jonah or the reverse. Finally it was decided to vote by States and to contribute according to land values. Trimming the States that reached to the Mississippi and the "South Sea" was a longer task which delayed the final adoption of the Articles of Confederation. Three months were consumed in getting its terms agreed upon by Congress amidst no end of amendment and revision, to be sent out to the States in its final form on the 17th of November, 1777, the day of Burgoyne's surrender. This

disastrous blow to the enemy hastened the adoption of the Articles of Confederation by the States, and gave new hopes to Americans here and to their friends abroad, especially in France, which was waiting to send more freely and openly the aid that had been promised, and furnished covertly but generously by individuals.

Hancock began to feel the strain of his difficult position in the wrangling over Articles of Confederation, and in the increasing labors consequent upon movements of the army and the danger of the enemy's occupying the city.[1] He was also contending with physical infirmities which the climate of Philadelphia did not help to lessen, nor his unsatisfactory mode of life in lodgings which he had taken after the return of Congress from Baltimore. He had left Mrs. Hancock in that city with an infant daughter, named Lydia Henchman for the aunt. The following letter gives a glimpse of his lonely life.

"PHILADELPHIA 10th March 1777

"MY DEAR DEAR DOLLY: My detention at the Ferry & the badness of the Roads prevented my arriving here untill Friday Evening.

"I put my things into Mr. Williams' house, and went in pursuit of Lodgings. Neither Mrs. Yard nor Lucy could accommodate me. I then went to Smith's and borrowed two Blankets & returned to my own house; soon after which Mrs. Smith sent me up a very handsome supper, with a

[1] In addition to duties of the presiding officer there were committee labors, as of that on fitting out a naval armament. "Journal of Continental Congress," III, 425.

Table cloth, Knives & forks, plates, salt, a print of Butter, Tea, double refined Sugar, a Bowl of Cream, a Loaf of Bread &c &c here I have remain'd and shall do so waiting your arrival. Indeed Mrs. Smith oblig'd me much. I however lead a doleful lonesome life. Tho on Saturday I dined at Dr. Shippins'. He desires his Regds. he is as lonesome as I. On Saturday I sat down to dinner at the little table with Folger on a piece of Roast Beef with Potatoes. We drank your health with all our Baltimore friends. Last night Miss Lucy came to see me, & this morning while I was at Breakfast on Tea with a pewter tea-spoon, Mrs. Hard came in. She could not stay to Breakfast with me. I spend my evenings at home, snuff my candles with a pair of scissors, which Lucy seeing, sent me a pair of snuffers & dipping gravy out of the Dish with my pewter tea spoon, she sent me a large silver spoon and two silver tea spoons — that I am now quite rich.

"I shall make out as well as I can, but I assure you, my Dear Soul I long to have you here & I know you will be as expeditious as you can. When I part from you again it must be a very extraordinary occasion. I have sent everywhere to get a gold or silver rattle for the child with a coral to send but cannot get one. I will have one if possible on yr coming. I have sent a sash for her & two little papers of pins for you. If you do not want them you can give them away.

"However unsettled things may be I could not help sending for you as I cannot live in this way. We have an abundance of lies. The current report is that General Howe is bent on coming here, another report is that the Mercht's at New York are packing their goods & putting them on board ships & that the troops are going away, neither of which do I believe. We must, however, take our chances, this you may depend on, that you will be ever the object of my utmost care & attention.

"I have been exceedingly busy, since I have been here, tho' have not yet made a Congress, are waiting for the South Carolina gentleman. If Capt. Hammond is arrived with any things from Boston, You will have them put in the Waggons and brought here. If she should not be arriv'd leave the Receipt with Mr. S. Purviance & desire him to receive the things and send them to me. The inclosed Letter give to Mr. Newhouse, one of the Waggoners, Send for him & let him know when you will be ready. I hope you will be able to pack up all your things quickly & have them on the way & that you will soon follow, be careful in packing and do not leave anything behind. Let Harry see that everything is safely stored in the waggons. I send Mr. McCloskey, he will be very useful. I am confident Mr. & Mrs. Hilligas will assist you, pray my best Regds. to them. I have not had time to go to their house but intend it today & shall write Mr. Hilligas by the Post. Young Mr. Hillagas got here on Saturday, he is well, he delivered me your letter & one from his father. I was exceeding glad to hear from you and hope soon to receive another Letter. I know you will set off as soon as You can. endeavor to make good stages. You may easily lodge at Mr. Steles' at Bush the first night. It is a good house. However I must leave those matters to you as the Road must in great measure determine your Stages. I do not imagine there is any danger of small-pox on the Road. Wilmington is the most dangerous, but go on to Chester. I want to get somebody cleaver to accompany you. I hope to send one to you, but if I should not be able, you must make out as well as you can."

"11 March.

"I will write by the Post tomorrow. I can't add as I am now call'd on. I hope no accident will happen. Inclosed you have a few memo. as to pack'g &c which I submit to your perusal.

"My best regds to Mr & mrs. Purviance Capt Nicholson & Lady, Mr. Luce & family & indeed all friends. My love to Miss Katy, and tell her to Ransack the house & leave nothing behind. The Waggoners will attend you at all times. Remember me to all the family. May every blessing of an Indulgent providence attend you. I most sincerely wish you a good journey & hope I shall soon, very soon, have the happiness of seeing you with the utmost affection and Love. My Dear Dolly,

"I am yours forever

"JOHN HANCOCK."

"Doctor Bond call'd on me, Desir'd his complements. He will inoculate the child as soon as it comes.

"Mrs. Washington got here on Saturday. I went to see her. She told me she Drank tea with you.

"Let Harry take the Continental Horse, Saddle & Bridle, that I left at Mr. Purviance's & tell Mr. Purviance to charge his keeping in his public credit. If Capt Hardy returns the Horse I lent him with the Saddle & Bridle he must also come. Get the heavy waggon off as soon as you can, that they may be here as early as possible as we shall much want the things after you get here. I have got your bundle safe with the Petticoat, Table Cloth, I have not sent it as I thought you would not want it."[1]

In the evening of the day on which he finished this letter he wrote another of similar length and substance apparently to serve as a diversion in his solitude. It must have taken him a good part of the night to write it.

[1] "Old Boston Days and Ways," p. 237, from letter formerly in the possession of the late Mrs. William Wales.

"Philadelphia, 11 March 1777
"9 o'clock Evening

"My Dearest Dolly: No Congress today, and I have been busily employ'd as you can conceive; quite lonesome & in a domestick situation that ought to be relieved as speedily as possible, this Relief depends upon you, and the greater Dispatch you make & the Sooner you arrive here, the more speedy will be my relief. I dispatched Harry, McClosky and Dennis this morning with Horses & a Waggon as winged Messengers to bring you along. God grant you a speedy and safe Journey to me. Mr. Pluckrose the Bearer of this going for Mrs. Morris, I have engaged him to proceed on to Baltimore to deliver you this; I wrote you this morning to bring all the things that came from Boston to this place but should they be landed before you leave Baltimore, I could wish you would present One Quintal of the Salt Fish & three or four Loaves of the Sugar to Mr. Sam'l Purviance, or in case they should not be landed, leave directions to have these articles taken out and presented to Mr. P with our Compliments. I forget what other things there are but if you choose to make presents of any of them, I pray you to do it. If in the prosecution of your Journey you can avoid lodging at the head of Elk, I wish you would, it is not so good as the other houses, but this must depend on Circumstances; I wish you to make yr journey as agreeable as possible. Should any Gentlemen & Ladies accompany you out of Town do send McClosky forward to order a handsome Dinner and I beg you to pay every Expence, order McClosky to direct the Landlord not to Receive a single farthing from any one but by your Direction & order a genteel Dinner; plenty —

"If Mr. Thomson cannot be ready with his Waggons as soon as you are, do not wait, but part of the Guard with an Officer must attend yours, and part be left to guard his. I only wish to have you here, and if you cannot readily

attend to the Return of the things borrowed of Mr. Dugan, leave them in the Care of some trusty person to deliver them and pay him for his trouble. Am I not to have another letter from you? Surely I must. I shall send off Mr. Rush or Tailor to-morrow or next day to meet you. I wish I could do better for you but we must Ruff it; I am so harrassed with applications, & have been sending off Expresses to Call all the Members here, that I have as much as I can Turn my hands to; I don't get down to dinner, Catch a Bit, I write, & then at it again [the writing is here illegible] . . . if it promotes the cause I am happy, do beg Mr. Hillegas[1] to send some money by my Waggons, or I shall be worn out with applications, pray him to take pity on me, I have lent my own stock already to stop some mouths.

"My respects to Mr. & Mrs. Hillegas, they must excuse my not writing now, I have not seen their son since he deliver'd me your Letter, I asked him to Call, but I suppose he is so engaged with his Connection he has not had time, I could wish to have it in my Power to do him any Service for the great regard I bear to his worthy Parents, I assure you I really love them, I wish they were Coming with you, I could then have a Family where I could with pleasure go, & ask them a hundred Questions, & take a thousand Liberties with them, that I cannot do in any Family now here, I shall Regret their absence, but I am Determin'd to make a point of having them up, for I cannot attend to the applications that are made to me in consequence of the Treassurer's absence; he must come, He shall come if I have any influence.

"Lucy & Nancy call'd on me, I was busy over papers; we drank a glass together to our Baltimore Friends, I waited on them home, & return'd to my Cottage; Jo comes in with a plate of minc'd Veal, that I must stop, I shall take the plate in one hand, the knife in the other, without cloath, or any Comfort, & Eat a little & then to writing, for I have

[1] Michael Hillegas was one of the two joint treasurers of the United States, holding the office until 1789.

not room on the Table to put a plate, I am up to the eyes in papers. Adieu for the present.

"The Inclosed Letter Lucy just sent me for you. — Supper is over, no Relish, nor shall I have till I have you here, & I wish Mr. & Mrs. Hilligas to join us at Supper on Tuesday Evening when I shall Expect you. I shall have Fires made & everything ready for your Reception, tho' I dont mean to hurry you beyond measure. do as you like, don't fatigue yourself in Travelling too fast. I keep Josh on trial, he promises Reformation, he knows fully his fate. My best Regards to Mr. & Mrs. Purviance, to Mr. Lay & Family, Capt Nicholson & wife, Mr. Stewart & wife & all Friends. Tell Mr. Purviance & Capt. Nicholson I shall write them fully in a day or two and Determine all matters to their satisfaction, I am so worried that I cannot even steal time to write them now. Tell Mr. Purviance I Rec'd his Letter by Post and will forward the Letters he Inclosed me to Boston & Newbury to-morrow. Pray let Dr. Wisenhall know that I Re'd his Letter, & am much obliged for his attention to the Child and that I will do everything in my power for the Gentleman who he mentions in his Letter, you will Recompense him for calling to see the Child.

"Remember me to all the Family. If Nancy inclines to come in the Waggon and you like it she may Come, do as you like in every instance my love to Miss Katy, tell her if anything is left behind, I shall have at her, for she Ransack'd when we left Philadelphia & she must do the same now —

"The Opinion of some seems to be that the Troops will leave New York, where bound none yet know; one thing I know that they can't at present come here, perhaps they are going to Boston or up North River. Time will discover. Never fear, we shall get the day finally with the smiles of heaven.

"Do Take precious care of our dear little Lydia.

"Adieu. I long to see you. Take Care of Yourself. I am,

"my Dear Girl
"Yours most affectionately
"JOHN HANCOCK.

"Do let Harry Buy & bring 1 or 2 Bushells of Parsnips Bring all the wine, none to be got here." [1]

Such was the plight of the official who represented the presidency in the inchoate and formative period of transition from colonial to national life in America. The externals of Congress were primitive enough; there was no Supreme Court, and no imitation of the Court of St. James, of which Hancock had a glimpse sixteen years before. Now, as President of Congress he was living with a servant or two in a cottage, his state papers, his correspondence, and his meals a good deal mixed on a single table. His head seems to be in a similar condition, giving his long epistles the saltatory style of a writer whose mind is distracted by a diversity of cares, to which is added the manner of a husband and father who hurries his family's home-coming, with now and then a suspicion that haste may be inconvenient to them. He writes everything as it comes into his head, forgetting sometimes what he has already mentioned. A vivid imagination is not needed to picture Mrs. Hancock reading these successive letters. Perhaps their length and frequency discouraged her attempts to answer them. Evidently she waited

[1] "New England Magazine," Old Series, XII, p. 535.

to reply in person when she should have accomplished the miles from Baltimore to Philadelphia. Her stay there, however, was short. The heat of the city made it desirable to take herself and the child into Massachusetts, leaving her husband to fare as he might during the remainder of the session. From his letters it is plain that she did not improve in her habits of correspondence. From "York Town, October 18, 1777," he wrote:—

"My Dear Dolly: I am now at this Date & not a line from you. Not a single word have I heard from you since your letter by Dodd, immediately upon your arrival at Worcester, which you may judge affects me not a little, but I must submit & will only say that I expected oftener to have been the object of your attention.

"This is my sixth letter to you. The former ones I hope you have Rec'd, by the Completion of those Letters you will I dare say be apprehensive that my stay here was nearly Determined for the winter & that I had thoughts of soliciting your Return to me. My thoughts on that subject were for a season serious, but various reasons have occurred to induce me to alter my Resolutions, and I am now to inform you that I have come to a fixed Determination to Return to Boston for a short time & I have notified Congress in form of my Intentions. You will therefore please immediately on Receipt of this tell Mr. Spriggs to prepare the light Carriage and Four Horses & himself to be ready to proceed on to Hartford or Fairfield, as I shall hereafter direct to meet me on the Road. If my old Black Horses are not able to perform the journey he must hire two. The particular Time of my setting out & when (I would have Spriggs come forward) you shall know by Dodd, the Express who I shall Dispatch tomorrow morning. My present

Intention is to leave Congress in eight days, but more particulars in my next. I shall hope & must desire that you will take a Seat in the carriage & meet me on the Road, which will much advantage your health, & you may be assured will be highly satisfactory to me, & I have desired Mr. Bant to accompany you in the carriage & when we meet he can take my sulkey and I return with you in the carriage to town. Mr. Bant must hire or borrow a Servant to attend you on Horse back as Harry & Ned are both with me & Joe is not suitable. My dear I hope your health will admit of your coming with Mr. Bant. I long to see you. I shall close all my Business in three Days & indeed have already nearly finished, & when once I set out shall travel with great speed. Nothing shall prevent my seeing you soon with the leave of providence; but a prevention of passing the North River I shall push hard to get over, even if I go as far as Albany. I need not tell you there will be no occasion of you writing me after the receipt of this. My best wishes attend you for every good. I have much to say, which I leave to a Cheerful Evening with you in person.

"God Bless you my Dear Dolly

"I am

"Yours most affectionately

"JOHN HANCOCK."[1]

The reader will discern a faintly imperative mood in this letter, owing perhaps to the neglect with which the writer thinks he has been treated, and not without some reason for his opinion. However, he is not so cast down that he cannot write once more, as will appear later.

Within the week preceding the date of this letter

[1] "N. E. Historical and Genealogical Register," XII, 106.

Hancock had asked Congress for two months' leave of absence in the following communication:—

"GENTLEMEN: Friday last completed two years & five months since you did me the honor of electing me to fill this chair. As I could never flatter myself your choice proceeded from any idea of my abilities, but rather from a partial opinion of my attachment to the liberties of America, I felt myself under the strongest obligations to discharge the duties of the office, and I accepted the appointment with the firmest resolutions to go through the business annexed to it in the best manner I was able. Every argument conspired to make me exert myself, and I endeavored by industry and attention to make up for every other deficiency.

"As to my conduct both in & out of Congress, in the execution of your business, it is improper for me to say anything. You are the best judges. But I think I shall be forgiven if I say I have spared no expense, or labor, to gratify Your wishes, and to accomplish the views of Congress. My health being much impaired I find some relaxation absolutely necessary after such constant application. I must therefore request Your Indulgence for leave of absence for two months. But I cannot take my departure, gentlemen, without expressing my thanks for the civility & politeness I have experienced from you. It is impossible to maintain this without a heartfelt pleasure. If any expressions have dropped from my lips which have given offence to any member during the long period that I have had the honor to fill this chair, I hope they will be passed over, for they were prompted by no unkind motive.

"May every happiness, gentlemen, attend you, both as members of this house and as individuals, and I pray Heaven that unanimity & perseverance may go hand in hand in this house, and that everything which may tend to distract or divide your councils be forever banished." [1]

[1] "Mass. State Archives," Ms. vol. 196, p. 23.

In response to this address a motion was made on the day when he took leave of Congress to present him with the thanks of that body for the admirable discharge of his duties; but opposition came from an unexpected quarter when New England delegates, for reasons of their own, defeated the motion on the pretence that it was injudicious to pass complimentary resolutions in the case of any president. Samuel Adams got the credit of being responsible for this affront, which Hancock resented to the extent of breaking with his friend after his return to Boston. In this he had numerous partisans to join with him, to the disadvantage of Adams and to the maintenance of an ill-feeling which lasted for years. Hancock had not forgotten the matter of electing a commander-in-chief, in which both the Adamses were active and influential, overlooking merits which he at least thought worthy of consideration. Here was an opportunity to atone in part for that slight which his colleagues had not only neglected, but had added another indignity to the first, when a compliment would have been freely paid him by general consent. The entire question of the enmity between Hancock and Adams is not settled by mention of any single cause or occasion. They were members of two parties that sprang up in Congress; they belonged to two divergent social castes; their habits of thought and views of policy were not alike; their ambitions were in different

directions, and there was no strong tie to bind them closer as the Revolution proceeded towards the organization of a new republic, where each man should find his own. The early need of each for the other vanished: soon it was to be every man for himself.

In a fortnight from the date of his last letter to his wife he was on his way toward Boston and wrote the following letter to her: —

"Dover (within 60 miles of Hartford)
"Saturday 1 of Clock
"8 Nov. 1777.

" My Dear: I am thus far on my journey to meet you, thank Luck for it. I have gone thro' many Difficulties on the Road, but that I shall not mind. The Remembrance of these Difficulties will vanish when I have the happiness of seeing You. I am still obliged to have my foot wrapped up in Baize, but I brave all these things. I hire this person to carry You this letter in Confidence it will meet You at Hartford. I shall get along as fast as I can, but having a party of Light horse with me I do not travel so fast as I otherwise should. What if you should on Monday morning set out to meet me, on the Litchfield Road & then if I am not able to reach Hartford that day, I shall have the satisfaction of seeing You on the Road. If you think the ride will be too much I would not have you undertake it, but I hope You will not ride many miles before we shall meet, as I trust Mr. Bant is with you. my Regd's to him, my best wishes attend him. Remember me to Mrs. Collier for I suppose you are there. I am sorry I cannot take Fairfield in my way but I crossed so high up it was not possible. I have much to say, but refer all to the happy

time when I shall be with you. God bless you — my dear girl, and believe me with sincere affection

"Yours forever,

"JOHN HANCOCK.

"Mrs. McDagle this moment comes into the Tavern & is going to dine with us."[1]

According to his request and arrangements his wife met him on the road, as implied in a paragraph in a Hartford newspaper of November 19: "On Friday last passed through this town, escorted by a party of light dragoons, the Hon. John Hancock, President of the American Congress, with his lady, on his way to Boston, after an absence, on public business, of more than two and a half years." But the wife came without the child, who had died during the summer stay in Massachusetts.

It was safe travelling in New England after the Hudson River was crossed, the British being occupied elsewhere; but the official station of the President of Congress and the sentiment of the time, together with its agreement with Hancock's own sense of his position, required a display commensurate with its importance. This was confirmed by the cordial demonstrations of welcome which attended his arrival home, as reported in the "Pennsylvania Ledger."

"This day arrived at Boston in Massachusetts, under an escort of American light dragoons, the Honorable John Hancock, Esq., President of the American Congress, and

[1] Wales Ms. printed in Brown's "His Book," p. 222.

first major-general of the militia of that state. By his coming into town sooner than was expected he avoided some public marks of respect which would otherwise have been paid him; his arrival was made known by ringing the bells, the discharge of thirteen cannon of Colonel Craft's park of artillery on the common, the cannon on the fortress on Fort Hill, and the shipping in the harbor. The independent and light infantry companies paid him their military salutes. He received the compliments of gentlemen of all orders; and every indication was given of the sense the public has of his important services to the American cause." [1]

Hancock was not so puffed up by his exalted station in Congress as to despise the position of moderator in a town-meeting which was called soon after his arrival home, to which he was unanimously chosen, as also at another meeting a week later. At the first one, held on December 8, the thanks of the town were voted him for the donation of one hundred and fifty cords of wood to the poor in a time of distress. In the first month of the new year, 1778, a meeting of the State representatives was held, when the Articles of Confederation and perpetual Union between the United States of America which had been framed by Congress came up for discussion and ratification. Massachusetts was specially favored in having Hancock in the

[1] Cited in "Old Boston Days and Ways," Crawford, p. 250.

There was a man who could write to a sympathetic friend: "Pray, my Friend, what occasioned the very sudden Return of Mr. H.? He arrived quite unexpected. Various are the conjectures for the true Cause; his Friends say the airs of Philadelphia doth not suit him." — Letter of Savage to S. Adams from Boston, 2d July, 1778. — "Mass. Hist. Soc. Proc.," 1910, p. 333

chair to set forth reasons why this and that provision had been inserted. It is not improbable that his return had been timed with reference to this action of his native State, which he would wish to have concurrent with the final decisions of Congress; a result not to be secured in some States with ready unanimity, nor without a repetition of congressional debates. John Adams might have had another explanation of Hancock's return, like the one he recorded in his Diary the year before: —

"Mr. Hancock told C. W. yesterday, that he had determined to go to Boston in April. Mrs. Hancock was not willing to go till May, but Mr. Hancock was determined upon April. Perhaps the choice of a Governor may come on in May. What aspiring little creatures we are! How subtle, sagacious, and judicious this passion is! How clearly it sees its object, how constantly it pursues it, and what wise plans it devises for obtaining it!" [1]

It is not always easy to reconcile the sentiments of John Adams about John Hancock at different times. William Cunningham in 1791 reminds Adams that on one occasion in his own house, —

"You turned yourself towards your front door, and pointing to a spot in view, you laughingly exclaimed, 'yes, there is the place where the great John Hancock was born. . . . John Hancock! a man without head and without heart! — the mere shadow of a man! — and yet a Governor of old Massachusetts!'"

But in a letter to Judge Tudor, June 5, 1813, Adams wrote: —

[1] "Life and Works of John Adams," II, 435.

"The two young men whom I have known to enter the stage of life with the most luminous, unclouded prospects, and the best founded hopes, were James Otis and John Hancock. They were both essential to the Revolution, and both fell sacrifices to it. . . . They were the first movers, the most constant, steady, persevering springs, agents, and most disinterested sufferers, and firmest pillars, of the whole Revolution."

And in a letter to Rev. Jedediah Morse, D.D., in 1818, he wrote:—

"Of Mr. Hancock's life, character, generous nature, great and distinguished sacrifices and important services, if I had forces, I should be glad to write a volume. But this I hope will be done by some younger and abler hand."[1]

Hancock was living when the invidious remark was made to Cunningham. He had been dead twenty and twenty-five years respectively when the letters were penned by Adams; an instance of the adjustments which time often makes. An English author[2] thinks that he was to some degree actuated by a malevolent feeling towards Hancock, and declares that he was mentally and morally incapable of discerning high merit in any one but himself.

A pleasant contrast to the sneering insinuations of John Adams is revealed in the letter of Washington to Hancock on the eve of his departure, in reply to one from the latter containing a notice of his intention to retire from the chairmanship. It

[1] Loring's "Boston Orators," p. 116.

[2] Henry Belcher, in "First American Civil War," II, 5.

was similar to that which he had laid before Congress, containing this additional sentence: —

"As the Congress will doubtless proceed to appoint a successor in my stead, on him therefore will devolve the business of the chair. The politeness and attention I have ever experienced from you, in the course of our correspondence, will always be the source of the most pleasing satisfaction to me."

Washington thereupon wrote: —

"HEAD-QUARTERS, 22 October, 1777.

"DEAR SIR,

"It gives me real pain to learn, that the declining state of your health, owing to your unwearied attention to public business, and the situation of your private affairs, oblige you to relinquish a station, though but for a time, which you have long filled with acknowledged propriety. Motives as well of a personal as of a general concern make me regret the necessity that compels you to retire, and to wish your absence from office may be of as short duration as possible. In the progress of that intercourse, which has necessarily subsisted between us, the manner in which you have conducted it on your part, accompanied with every expression of politeness and regard to me, gives you a claim to my warmest acknowledgements.

"I am not so well informed of the situation of things up the North River, as to be able to give you any satisfactory advice about your route. I should rather apprehend it might be unsafe for you to travel that way at this time, and would recommend, if you can do it without any material inconvenience, that you should defer your journey till there is some change in affairs there, or till they have taken a more settled form. If you should, however, resolve to proceed immediately, and will be pleased to signify the time, an escort of horse will meet you at Bethlehem, to accompany

you to General Putnam's camp, where you will be furnished with another escort in the further prosecution of your journey.

"I am extremely obliged to you for your polite tender of services during your intended residence at Boston, and shall always be happy, when leisure and opportunity permit, if you will give me the pleasure of hearing from you. I have the honor to be, &c." [1]

On one occasion at least, it appears by the foregoing letter, safety demanded the attendance of a troop, which Hancock's maligners attributed to his love of display. Some of them illustrated the partisan spleen of the day by saying that tavern keepers had to pursue the company to get pay for their entertainment; which assertion bears the myth-mark of a fragment left on the highway by some bankrupt circus rather than a part of the itinerary of John Hancock travelling at the country's expense or his own.[2] Of course the chief value of the two letters is their testimony to the

[1] Sparks' "Washington's Writings," v, 106.

[2] It is of a piece with this paragraph in the "Pennsylvania Ledger" of March 11, 1778: —

"John Hancock of Boston appears in public with all the state and pageantry of an Oriental prince; he rides in an elegant chariot which was taken in a prize to the *Civil Usage* pirate vessel, and by the owners presented to him. He is attended by four servants dressed in superb livery, mounted on fine horses richly caparisoned; and escorted by fifty horsemen with drawn sabres, the one half of whom precede and the other follow his carriage."

On some occasion of ceremony, doubtless, as the author of "Old Boston Days and Ways" suggests when citing the above newspaper correspondent on page 275. Even the Spartan Samuel Adams once rode in Hancock's coach drawn by six horses on the occasion of M. Gérard's arrival as the first French ambassador to

cordial relations existing between the two principal officials, civil and military, in a time when there were jealousies, rivalries, and plottings enough to imperil the cause for which all pretended to be working, and that more than once came near ruining it; as in the instances of General Charles Lee's disloyalty, the Conway cabal's scheming against Washington, and Arnold's treason. There was nothing in the attitude of these two principals beyond a stately ceremoniousness characteristic of the age in which they lived and the caste to which they belonged.

The anniversary of the "Massacre" was to be kept in Boston for five years more before it should be superseded by the national celebration of the Fourth of July. On its eighth return, 1778, Jonathan William Austin was the orator at the Old Brick Meeting-House. John Hancock presided as the foremost citizen at the Faneuil Hall meeting, recalling his own performance four years earlier. Four days later he took the chair at the annual election of town officers, but was called to the House of Representatives on the following day. On the 27th he was again presiding, as if there were no other man in Boston who could satisfy its people. And when on May 27 seven men were to be chosen to represent the town in the General Court, Hancock received three hundred and thirty-five votes,

the United States. But he seldom used the coach presented him when governor, returning it at the end of his term.

the largest number given any candidate. His popularity was undiminished and his usefulness at home unimpaired by his malady, to all appearances.

He had now been absent from Congress six months, with what rest from parliamentary practice his townsmen would allow him, and his own willingness to be employed. An additional reason for his prolonged stay may be found in the expected arrival of another child, who was born May 21, and named John George Washington, an intended compliment to the Commander-in-Chief, to which he could have not been insensible, and an evidence of Hancock's continued regard for him. The former President was soon back in Congress as a deputy, and on the 23d of June was writing to his wife from Yorktown whither the deputies had taken themselves after the occupation of Philadelphia by Sir William Howe.

"York Town, June 23, 1778.

"My Dearest Dolly: — Mr. Taylor having agreeably to his wish been Charg'd with some Dispatches for our Commissioners in France, sets off for Boston immediately & to Sail from thence as Soon as the Packett is ready, by him I embrace the oppor'y of writing you, altho' I wrote you Two Letters the Day before yesterday, & this is my Seventh Letter, and not one word have I heard from you since your departure from Boston. I am as well as the peculiar scituation of this place will admit, but I can by no means in justice to myself continue long under such disagreeable Circumstances, I mean in point of Living, the mode is so very different from what I have always been accustom'd to, that to continue it long would prejudice

my health exceedingly. This moment the Post arriv'd, and to my very great Surprise and Disappointment not a single line from Boston; I am not dispos'd to Resent, but it feels exceedingly hard to be slighted and neglect'd by those from whom I have a degree of Right to expect different Conduct; I would have hir'd any one to have sent a few Lines just to let me know the State of your health, but I must Endeavor not to be so Anxious & be as easy as some others seem to be. I will expect no letters nor write any, & then there will be no Disappointment; So much for that. To be serious, I shall write no more till I hear from you, this is agreeable to my former promise. It really is not kind, when you must be sensible that I must have been very anxious about you & the little one. Devote a little time to write me, it will please me much to hear of you, I am sure you are dispos'd to oblige me, & I pray I may not be disappointed in my opinion of your Disposition.

"I hope this will meet you tolerably Recover'd from your late confinement, I wish to hear of your being below Stairs & able to take care of our Dear little one. I am much concern'd about your improving the fine Season in Riding. I am sorry I did not take hir'd horses & leave you mine, but I beg you to spare no Cost in Riding for the Establishment and Continuance of your health, hire horses whenever you are dispos'd to Ride, be as frugal & prudent in other matters as is consistent with our Scituation; I wish to know every Occurence since my departure, pray be particular as to your health in your Letters & give me an exact state of little John. Does Mrs. Brackett intend continuing with you? I beg she may at least until my Return. My love to her, pray her to take great care of the little fellow. As soon as the City of Phila is cleansed, I judge Congress will remove thither, & as soon as we have got over the important Business now before Congress I shall solicit leave to Return home, as it will not

be necessary for so many of our Members to be here, but of this more hereafter.

"As I have wrote so many Letters & see no Returns, & as I am called to attend Congress, I must Refer you to Mr. Taylor for every particular relative to our Scituation.

"My regards to Mr. & Mrs. Bant, my Brother & Sister, & indeed to all Friends as if nam'd. Remember me to Sprigs and Harry, & to all in the Family.

"Do let me have frequent Letters, you will oblige me much. My best wishes ever attend you for the highest Felicity, & I am with the utmost Affection and Love.

"Yours For ever,

"JOHN HANCOCK."[1]

The "important business" before Congress which he mentions in this letter had brought him back as a delegate, as Henry Laurens of South Carolina had been elected President in his place on November 1, 1777, after his departure for Boston. Tidings of the treaty with France had been received in April, 1778; Lord North's olive-branch commission, granting all that the colonies had originally claimed, had arrived to divide and divert the colonials, to which Congress replied in effect that when the king and Parliament should be disposed to put an end to the war they would attend to his proposals as an independent nation.[2] The embassy failing, the war went on, although desertions and financial troubles were disheartening its supporters, and in both the army and Congress intriguers were at-

[1] "New England Magazine," Old Series, XII, p. 537.

[2] More fully stated in "Britain and her Rivals," Arthur D. Innes; London, 1895, p. 300.

tempting to supplant Washington, their only hope. In the midst of the general darkness the sky cleared over Philadelphia when, after the famous farewell banquet to Loyalist friends, in which Major André figured, General Clinton led the British army out toward New York, and the American army took its place on June 18 under Arnold's command. Then a part of Congress was glad to get back to its old quarters on July first; but a week later, in the lack of a quorum, President Laurens, "as an individual," congratulated Washington upon his success at the Battle of Monmouth ten days before. On the seventh, however, a sufficient number assembled to pass commendatory resolutions for Washington's activity in pursuit, and general efficiency in battle in gaining an important victory. They might have added: despite the treacherous retreat of General Lee, by which the partial victory came near being turned into a defeat. As it happened, by the personal valor of the commander, the field was recovered and another impulse given to the rising tide of confidence.

According to his intention, expressed in the last letter to his wife, Hancock left for home soon after the return of Congress to Philadelphia. He naturally found less interest in its proceedings than when he was chairman of a deliberative body whose distinction for ability and wisdom was greater than it had lately been, and some of whose members had not been contributing to the success of the

cause by their disloyalty to the Commander-in-Chief. It is more than probable, too, that absence from home, the infrequency of his wife's letters, the comparative solitude of his lodgings, and the impaired condition of his health made longer residence in Philadelphia less endurable than formerly.

On his arrival in Boston the first week in August he was chosen moderator of a town-meeting which had a matter to consider second in importance to none that had arisen since the declaration of independence. He was also chosen chairman of a committee appointed to consider the question and report at a future meeting. This question was in brief, — What answer shall be returned to Loyalists who were seeking to return to Boston, and what policy shall be pursued toward them in the future?

It could not be expected that Tories would obtain mercy at the hands of the Whigs during the war, nor that the hatred and prejudice against them would die out in that generation or even the traditional stigma of their position in the next. From the patriot side they were regarded as a part of the royal forces fighting with the king against their countrymen and the liberties which had been allowed them by previous monarchs, and later, against the independence which a growing majority was trying to secure. It was of no avail to remind Whigs that before 1770 every inhabitant of the land was a Tory, some grumbling against the throne and ministry according to the right and

habit of true Britons everywhere, but for five years from that time having no thought of more than a reform of recent legislation and the repeal of a new king's oppressive enactments. Neither was it to any purpose to remind Whigs that Tories belonged to the conservative party of wealth, influence, prosperity, and respectability, which had more to lose than the shifty populace, without property or business interests, who had formed the rank and file of the revolutionary movement at first, as distinguished from the solid men who preferred to endure minor ills if thereby they should escape the greater ones which they foresaw in the breaking up of stable foundations. All at once or by rapid transfer these colonial upper-class people became political criminals and enemies to the leaders of revolt, and especially to their followers, who were always ready for rough methods of converting the aristocracy to their own side, even though at an occasional and material profit to themselves. In theory a republic was better than a monarchy; liberty than dependence: why should not everybody strike for freedom? Tories answered: Because your republic is as uncertain as the future, with drawbacks that are now unthought of but sure to appear. Moreover a war of indefinite duration and uncertain outcome lies between you and possible achievement or probable failure, with all that this means to rebels. We prefer to pay a threepenny tax and continue loyal citizens of an empire

which in the long run has held a foremost place among the nations of the earth.[1]

Accordingly they were at first counted as aliens by the insurgent class, then as enemies, and by the issue of the war they became outcasts. To be sure, their negative attitude at first did not continue, but changed into a hostile disposition in retaliation for persecutions inflicted. There is not much to say for the credit of either party in a civil war which went on within the war with Great Britain. If the Tories had seen the crown triumph their treatment of the rebels, as they called the Whigs, might have been no better than they themselves received. The human nature of a single race is not changed by party names or the fortune of war. Therefore it is an interesting speculation to conjecture what a victorious Tory party would have done with defeated Patriots. It is safe to say that Samuel Adams and John Hancock would have been sent to England for trial if not for execution as traitors; but towards the people at large there was a growing spirit of conciliation as the war went on, for reasons which cannot be detailed here. It is unfortunate that it cannot be said with equal truth that as the patriot cause looked more hopeful, and even when independence was assured, the hostility toward

1 "The first ebullition of popular patriotism had evaporated; and while all clamored about freedom, each wished to make as few sacrifices as possible in order to obtain it." Robert Sears's "Pictorial History of the American Revolution," p. 205.

resident or banished Loyalists was diminished. During the war every species of intimidation had been used to bring them into the patriot ranks; indignities not usually practised in dignified warfare had been thrust upon them. Eighty-five thousand had been driven into Canadian exile alone, besides other thousands who had fled to other British possessions, leaving houses and lands, business and friends. Confiscation followed exile, with poverty and distress in strange and inhospitable regions. The Acadian story which excites American sympathy has at least the mitigating feature of removal southward to gentler climes; while the colonial dispersion was chiefly into northern latitudes, which our Saxon ancestors used to designate as the domain of a chilly goddess with a name which, by a singular inversion of meaning, and the addition of one letter now belongs to a place of fiery torment. So the exiles themselves used to place in the same category "Hell, Hull, and Halifax."

Nor did the British troops have a better opinion of the chief city, which they called "a cursed cold, wintry place, even yet (April 18). Nothing to eat, and less to drink." However, they had only two months of it, for on June 7 they embarked for New York. But the fifteen hundred refugees were left in Canada to shift for themselves in suffering and privation wherever they could find a foothold. After two years they were now asking to be allowed to return to their beloved Boston. In the words of one of their number,

they had been "Loth to quit this Shore and will be Loth, while there is a glimmering of Hope of returning to their beloved abode in Peace and credit." [1]

Their appeal was now before Hancock and his committee to consider and report to the Legislature. The consideration was deliberate and the report delayed; but when at length it was made the form of it was as follows: —

"*Resolved* — that the Inhabitants of this Town will exert themselves to the utmost in supporting the Civil Magistrate in the execution of this Law, [against the Tories], that those professed Enemies to our Rights and Liberties, the first fomentors of our present Troubles, who have left this Country and aided the British Tyrant in his worse than savage measures, to deprive Americans of everything that ought to be held dear and sacred by any People, may not return and enjoy in common, the fruits of what our immortal Patriots, have toil'd and bled to procure us, and in some future time to be again the base and cursed Instruments of British Seducers, in involving a happy People in confusion and bloodshed, in order to realize the reward, and private advantages held out to such Traitors by the enemies of America."

This reply, which is in the style of Hancock, seems like a harsh answer to his old acquaintances

[1] "Letters of James Murray, Loyalist," p. 273. The clergy of the Church of England here naturally were loyalists. "Other clergymen were with the people, of the people, and ministers to the people." — Bancroft, "Hist. U. S.," VIII, 185. This recalls Lincoln's paraphrase at Gettysburg; but Webster anticipated both when he said: "It is, sir, the people's constitution, the people's government; made for the people, made by the people, and answerable to the people." — "Second Reply to Hayne," Jan. 26, 1830.

now in the desolate places of Nova Scotia; but the case against Tories as a body is not overstated. As early as the spring of 1775 there was an association of Loyalists in Massachusetts "for mutual defence against the rebels." After the Lexington affair, those in Boston formed themselves into a Volunteer Corps and insisted on staying in town to stand between the colonials and the British troops. They had opposed sending provisions to the besieged inhabitants; had urged the British government to strong action, and the soldiery to violence against the Whigs, while they denounced Gage's inactivity. It was worse in New York, where Tories constituted half the population. There was a body of militia in that State which at one time numbered 5,855 men; and in the country at large there were at least 50,000 of them in arms during the war at one time and another. They enlisted freely in the British army and navy, and furnished supplies to the enemy when American troops found it difficult to obtain them. Contemptible acts of partisan warfare may be passed over, since their Patriot foes repaid them in their own coin. Their hostility was even more fratricidal than that of the British against men of their own race, because they were fighting against their own countrymen, often neighbors and relatives, and protracting a war which would have been ended sooner if they had not held out encouragement to the crown and Parliament by constant

misrepresentation from the beginning to the end of the strife. Franklin considered them as the main cause of its continuance by making the ministry believe that the rebellion was by a few men of no account, and that the majority were ready to submit, they themselves being as they said four-fifths of the entire population.[1]

It was in the midst of the war and with such facts before them that Hancock and his friends considered the exiles' requests to return.[2] If the contest had been finished, with the result that followed five years later, this committee might have been asked which of the two general methods of victors toward the vanquished they were going to put themselves on record as pursuing, the generous or its opposite. Not much mercy has ever been expected from savage tribes in their brutish warfare, and no great favor between different races in ancient times, especially toward rebellious provinces. But between factions of the same race, citizens of the same country, neighbors in the same town, and members of the same families it is

[1] For further particulars respecting this important factor in the war for independence see the exhaustive work of Sabine on the "Loyalists of the American Revolution"; Van Tyne's "Loyalists in the American Revolution," and mention in his "American Revolution," with a bibliography of the subject on p. 338, in which James Murray's "Letters" are of peculiar interest. Also James H. Stark's "Loyalists of Massachusetts and the Other Side of the Revolution," — the Tory side.

[2] Concerning Refugees' claims see "American Archives," IV Series, 1232, 1344, 1377, 1381.

reasonable to look for lenity from the party which has the consolations of victory, and whose overlooking of mistaken views and misplaced hopes could not affect the outcome of the strife. Since this was not over, and thousands of Tories were in arms, hoping for the downfall of the Patriot cause, exiled bands or individuals could not be permitted to return with safety to the general welfare, however they might behave in a single State. Other States where they were making more trouble, as in the South, would not thank Massachusetts for what might be called giving aid and comfort to the enemy. The disturbing faction was less dangerous where it had betaken itself, although less comfortable. If they had been allowed to return they would have found Boston what they feared it would be for them without the presence of the British forces, "worse than Halifax" and the two other places in the triple alliteration above mentioned. Reproach and scorn would have been the least of their sufferings. There are sons and daughters associations of this and that colonial order, in the commendable desire to commemorate noble service in war and peace, but the great multitude of Loyalists, of whom Washington said that they had a right to choose their side; who at first were guilty of nothing more than of fidelity to the home government and the empire of which they were citizens, and later of living or dying for it, — of this large body and respectable in British eyes there is no

disposition to perpetuate the name and memory, unless in Canada. It stood for what was to pass away here; it resisted the coming of a better kingdom; it fell with the old domination and oppression; and the new order could not forget or forgive its hostility to republican principles and a democratic state.

Considering these and other aspects of one of the most vexatious problems that confronted the fathers, Hancock and his compatriots cannot be blamed for a seeming hardheartedness in turning a deaf ear to the entreaties of their former neighbors and friends to be allowed to return to their homes in the midst of hostilities. When these ceased, conditions were changed and generosity could prevail with greater safety; although it can be said: with less profit to holders of confiscated estates bought low.[1] Yet the best terms that Great Britain could secure for its loyal colonists when terms of peace were agreed upon were, that Congress should "recommend leniency to the several States" in their treatment of Tories.[2] For its own part the home government employed as many as it could, and for the temporary support of the unemployed it expended

[1] On Loyalist property the Patriot had a covetous eye. "$36,000,000 worth was confiscated by the State of New York alone." — Van Tyne, "American Revolution," p. 267.

[2] The first article of the treaty with Great Britain was to secure fishing rights: the second was a counter recommendation to Americans of consideration for Loyalists. The text of the treaty is in "National Documents," N. Y., 1908, p. 77.

over 40,000 pounds sterling annually before the end of the war. Afterward additional burdens were ungrudgingly assumed for the expatriated; five hundred acres of land to each family, building materials, tools, and even food. In this way nearly $9,000,000 were spent in Canada before 1787. In addition, some $19,000,000 were paid for losses of property by the well-to-do on their claims for forty millions. Among these were governors, judges, councillors, commissioners, college presidents, and clergymen. After all that was done for them they were dissatisfied and unhappy. In Canada they were wretched; in England they were disregarded and thrown back upon the companionship of the lower classes. There was little left for them but to drag out a lonely existence to the end of their days.[1]

[1] An instructive account of Loyalist life in England after the war is given by Trevelyan in his "American Revolution," III, 231. Also a personal account in Samuel Curwen's "Journal."

CHAPTER XVI

EXPEDITION TO RHODE ISLAND

When Hancock's commission as Colonel of the Cadets was revoked by General Gage soon after his arrival in Boston he said: "I shall always prefer retirement in a private station to being a tool in the hand of power to impress my countrymen." He also declined to serve as a governor's councillor and remained in the House of Representatives. But an appreciative commonwealth, by way of compensation, on February 8, 1776, "made choice by ballot in the House of the Honorable John Hancock, Esq. to be First Major-General of the Militia in this Colony." So far as authority and official station go he was now abundantly equipped for distinguished achievement in the country's service. All that was lacking to test his ability was a favorable opportunity. Soon this also was furnished.

The only places of any importance held by the enemy at that time were New York, and Newport, Rhode Island. In December, 1776, the island had been seized by Lord Percy, who left it to General Richard Prescott when he went home the following spring. This blustering hero ruled the town with a "big gnarled stick,"[1] his constant companion,

[1] John Fiske.

until that night when a party of Yankee soldiers caught him at a house five miles out of town, and taking him out of bed carried him off in his night-gown and sent him to General Washington on the Hudson, by whom he was afterward exchanged for General Lee — a poor bargain. In the summer of 1778 Sir Robert Pigott was in command of the troops on the island, numbering 6,000 men, including a strong detachment from the garrison in town which had been stationed at the northern end of the island. The capture of this force had for a year and a half seemed like the prospect of bagging half the British invaders, for which enterprise New England yeomen began to muster when the word was given. Nine thousand of them assembled, including fifteen hundred picked troops which Washington sent under Greene, who was at home in Rhode Island. Thither came also the aquatic Glover of Marblehead, invaluable where ferrying was to be done, and Lafayette where French was to be interpreted and spoken, as a good deal of it was to be before this expedition should end; for Count d'Estaing, his kinsman, was on the way with a fleet and four thousand French regulars. General John Hancock was also coming with about five thousand militia-men from Massachusetts.[1] Hopes were high that Pigott and his six thousand would be entrapped, and in this way:

[1] He commanded the right of the second line between the first and the reserve. 7 "Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll." IV, 246.

the French were to cross over from Conanicut island on the west to meet the Americans coming from the mainland on the east. Together they would get between the two British divisions and easily capture both.

Three things happened to upset this admirable arrangement. First, Pigott called in the northern division to the main garrison at Newport. Then Sullivan, who had kept the French fleet in the offing for ten days while waiting for troops to arrive, through some whim of his own suddenly and without notice to d'Estaing crossed over from Tiverton, the French troops being now on Conanicut.[1] At this moment Lord Howe appeared off point Judith with thirteen ships of the line, seven frigates, and several small vessels. Instead of leaving his land force to assist the American army d'Estaing took it aboard and sailed out to engage Howe. For two days the fleets circled around each other to get the weather-gage. On the third a tempest set in which was remembered for fifty years as the Great Storm.[2] Both squadrons were driven out to sea, and although a few straggling ships ex-

[1] For Sullivan's acount of his own precipitancy see 7 "Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll." IV, 247.

[2] For a description of one day in camp in the midst of this storm see the letter of the artist Trumbull on the 13th August, 1778, in 6 "Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll." IV, 126.

Major Lyman, Hancock's aide-de-camp, wrote Gen. Heath, — "Major General Hancock is in fine spirits, and sends compliments. We wait for nothing but fine weather to advance." — *Ib.*, p. 150.

changed shots the British were glad to steer for New York and the French for Boston to make repairs. It was three weeks before d'Estaing collected his dispersed and damaged fleet.[1] Overruled by his subordinate officers, he did not leave his troops to co-operate with the American army at Newport[2] and in consequence great disappointment and wrath followed, with insubordination and desertion. Then Clinton landed four thousand British troops, and the expedition which had promised so much ended by withdrawal of the American forces from the island.[3] The ten

[1] On the 12th Hancock wrote Washington: —

"Rhode Island, August 12, 1778.

"Dear Sir,

"Nothing material has turned up since my Letter of yesterday. There are flying Reports that Count DeEstaing has taken some and sunk other of the British Fleet but they are so vague and uncertain that nothing to be depended on can be collected. To my mortification I find that a large number of our Troops are without Tents or Covering and suffer very greatly in the present Storm. About 300 of our men who were enlisted for 15 days and whose time was out on yesterday, left the Army notwithstanding all my Desires and Entreaties with them to tarry but one Week longer. As soon as the Weather clears up I hope to have account of the French Fleet, Nothing material will be attempted but in conjunction with Count De Estaing." — "Mass. Archives," Ms. vol. 199, p. 413.

[2] Count d'Estaing's explanation of his action in this affair may be found in a letter to the Commander-in-Chief, in which he gave his approval of Sullivan's course. The latter was not so courteous. Sparks' "Writings of Washington," VI, 30.

[3] "Admiral Rodney tried to get Clinton to besiege Rhode Island (Newport) and recover the noblest harbor in America, but Clinton

days of delay in getting the militia together before British reinforcements arrived upset the whole enterprise. It also came near alienating the French allies through hasty words spoken and written by American officers and the general outcry of soldiers against the "false and fickle French."[1] Four gentlemen prevented a serious disruption: Washington and d'Estaing by their polite and reassuring letters to each other, and Lafayette by his seven hours' ride to Boston and conference with d'Estaing and the General Court about the Count's leading his regiments back to Newport.

John Hancock, however, was the man who stood between an angry populace and several ship-loads of foreign soldiers, sailors, and subordinate officers with leave to go ashore. A riot occurred between them and American sailors the hour they stepped on the wharves. The valuable French alliance was in danger of a chill. It was then that Hancock showed himself a greater diplomat than soldier. According to some of his contemporaries he did not distinguish himself in the Newport campaign: for that matter no one achieved greater glory than a successful retreat bestows; special mention being made by Congress of Lafayette's gal-

said it was too late." — Mark's "England and America," II, 491, 1067.

[1] The American sense of the French withdrawal to Boston is seen in a letter of Judge Barrett's to Gen. Heath, in which he speaks of the allies as "Heroes of Flight." — 7 "Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll." IV, 260.

lantry in bringing off sentries and pickets. But Hancock left the field before the encounter which hastened the retreat, pretending, his maligners said, to be anxious about the French fleet on its way to Boston. He knew the town well enough to have reasonable apprehensions about the reception it might meet, which were justified by the event. Eleven years afterward a political opponent in the campaign of 1789 illustrated the truism that any failings of a candidate in any age are capital for the opposition. He also threw a sidelight on the expedition, and incidentally exhibited a personal prejudice whose strength is its own antidote. But he cannot be passed by.

"Mr. H. was Major General of the Militia, at the time that memorable expedition was set on foot. He ever had a great fondness for parade of every kind. Having heard much of the pleasures of the camp, and conceiving this a fine opportunity to pluck a military laurel without any danger to his person, he sought, and obtained the command of our militia. — He appointed his aids — he prepared his accoutrements — and with all the parade of a veteran conquerer, he issued his orders, and made the necessary arrangements to march to the field. When he got to Rhode Island he took an eligible situation for his quarters — he appeared on the parade en militaire — he sallied out often for air and exercise, and he sometimes approached so near to the enemy, under the idea of reconnoitering, as to distinguish, by the aid of a good perspective, that the British flag was still flying at some miles' distance. Martial musick and military movements alone delighted; and never was the fire of military ambition so conspicuous in any man's countenance and con-

duct. . . . But this flame was of short duration. The severe cannonade at the arrival of the French fleet, though at several miles' distance, disordered his nerves; the sound of the drum disturbed his muscles, by alarming his fears; and his nightly slumbers were short and uncertain, from lively scenes of blood and carnage, which a heated imagination was continually presenting to his view.

"This situation was too painful and humiliating for the Man of the People long to endure. He grew peevish and uneasy — he complained of the length of the campaign — and he talked frequently of quitting the field. This, his aids, who were men of spirit, were fearful would soon happen. They felt for his and their own honour; they used every argument to allay his fears — to compose his nerves, and to awake his ambition, and were in hopes to succeed. But the departure of the fleet, the roar of the cannon, and the smell of powder was too much for our hero to support. He resolved to return home — he dreamed that his child was sick and dying — he fancied that the fleet had gone to Boston, and could not refit in his absence; but more than this, he imagined that the British were roused, and he could not believe it safe or prudent for the man of the people to remain any longer on the Island. His fears were more powerful than all other passions together; and he flattered himself, that by urging his great anxiety for the safety of the fleet as the cause of his flight he might save his reputation. . . . Having good cattle he reached home in a few hours, and the first question upon entering the town was, as to the safety of the fleet; but after being at rest a little time, and finding himself safe in his own house, his fears subsided — his solicitude for the fleet abated — and he enjoyed his pleasures as well as ever — he recounted his exploits in the field, and gave a lively description of the enemy's alarm when he reconnoitered their posts.

"Thus ended Mr. H.'s memorable campaign in Rhode

Island; and these were the laurels gathered in that famous expedition. If it be thought that they are not of the best tint possible, it should be remembered that he cropt them flying, and had not time to select the best plants.

"But to treat this important subject with more seriousness, I would ask, who that had the feelings of a man, or more than that, the feelings of a patriot, which he pretended to have, would have left the camp at so critical a moment; when the British were expected to attack the American army, and every one was anxious for the safety of our country and its cause. . . . A regard to his own honour, and the safety of his country, should have raised him above all concern for his personal safety, or the enjoyment of his friends and family at home. , . . But instead of this, the General was amongst the first, if not the very first, to leave the Island, in a time of danger; he deserted the post he sought after, and most unworthily filled; and he left the gentlemen who accompanied him, and the troops he commanded to shift for themselves, or fall a prey to the British. Instead of persuading his officers and men, by his own example, willingly to submit to soldiers' fare, and to keep those quiet under the hardships of their station who had before been accustomed to elegance and luxury; he was always studying new means of dissipation, and kept carriages constantly passing to supply him with luxuries from hence. . . .

"I would now ask, where was the merit of this unsoldierlike conduct? How or at what time did he serve the publick by this expedition, or do honour to himself? Did he not on the contrary do as much injury to the country, and dishonour to himself as he could do by an evil example? Was there anything in his conduct upon this occasion, that was not opposite to that of a Hero, or the 'Saviour of his Country?' Did he not leave those, who followed him from personal attachment to the field, in a very dangerous situation, and in a most disgraceful manner; and was the eventual

escape of the troops, which he led, from the hands of the British, in any degree owing to his attention, firmness or prudence?" [1]

There is no possibility of misunderstanding the spirit which inspired these sentences taken from one of ten partisan articles in a Boston newspaper before the election of a governor in 1789. They are in the style of Junius, so far as their acrimony and acerbity can make them, but there the likeness ends. However, present concern is not so much about the manner and method of a personal attack upon Governor Hancock as to inquire what other explanation there may be for what must be accepted as facts, since the bluntness of their statement is in itself a challenge to their denial, if it could have been made.

Let it be admitted that Hancock was not a military genius. That he ever aspired to anything beyond the captaincy of his Cadet Company must be taken as one of the instances of mistaking one's calling, and of the love of the pomp and circumstance of war apart from its inconveniences and hardships, suffering, and peril. On this particular campaign of delays and catastrophe there seems to have been the chance for but one man to achieve success, namely, the British commander, who missed his opportunity, when after the storm he might have swept his enemies from

[1] "Writings of Laco" (Stephen Higginson), in "Boston Centinel," 1789.

the Island, instead of leaving them to retreat. Hancock could not be expected to outshine Sullivan and Greene: the retreat was determined upon, and it was only a question as to whether he could be of more service in the field or in Boston. It may be conceded that he was of no great use in helping to break camp and get the army off the Island. He had not had an opportunity to show of what value he would have been in an attack. There was something, however, that he could accomplish for the cause in his native town that would reach far beyond its limits.

As has been noted, there was imminent danger of alienating the French allies through words and treatment they had not merited, since American delays, and precipitate action at last, together with a tempest, had brought about the disaster for which blame must be thrown upon somebody. It fell upon the allies, and they resented it. Hancock saw, as Washington saw, that something must be done to counteract the animosity that was springing up on account of unwise words that some of the American officers had spoken and written, to be repeated by soldiers and civilians, ending with a scrimmage on the docks. It was not a reception to soothe the irritation of the French. Hancock, who had reason to foresee trouble, hastened home to do what he might to mend matters. Now he was in his own sphere and unsurpassed in it. A cordial and hospitable wel-

come to the allies might be of as much value as a royal order to continue to co-operate with the Americans. The town itself in a time of scarcity and general poverty could not do much toward entertaining, even if it had the disposition; but Hancock's fortune was not wholly gone, and therefore he undertook to represent the community in hospitable ways which were worth more just then than diplomacy or arms. Accordingly, invitations general and particular were sent to the French officers, which brought some forty of them to his house and table each day. Once they came uninvited to breakfast, driving cooks to despair, and compelling Mrs. Hancock to send servants out to milk all the cows on the Common without looking up their owners. This raid of the lace-bedizened appears to have been a Gallic pleasantry, paralleled by another which was inflicted on Bostonians when they accepted a return of hospitalities by the fleet, which Madam Hancock used to describe with graphic force in her old age. Delicacy was not a drug in society at that time. The straits to which the bounteous and patriotic host was sometimes reduced, the following letter will show. It was written to Henry Quincy, at that time in Providence.

"Monday Noon, 30 Augst.

"Dear Sir: The Philistines are coming upon me on Wednesday next at Dinner. To be Serious, the Ambassador &c., &c., &c., are to dine with me on Wednesday, and

I have nothing to give them, nor from the present prospect of our Market do I see that I shall be able to get anything in Town; I must beg the fav'r of you to Recommend to my Man Harry where he can get some Chickens, Ducks, Geese, Hams, Partridges, Mutton, or any thing that will save my Reputation in a Dinner, and by all means some Butter; Be so good as to help me, and you will much oblige me; is there any good mellons or Peaches, or any good fruit, near you? Your advice to Harry will much oblige me; Excuse me, I am very troublesome; Can I get a good Turkey; I walk'd in Town to-day; I dine on board the French Frigate to-morrow; so you see how I have Recovered.

"God bless you; if you see any thing good at Providence, do Buy it for me. I am Your Real friend JOHN HANCOCK."[1]

To crown all, Hancock in the name and to the credit of Boston, gave a banquet and ball to about

[1] From Salisbury's "Family Memorials" in Brown's "His Book," p. 228. "A large company of gentlemen and ladies dined on board the 'Languedoc' at the invitation of Count d'Estaing. A picture of General Washington at full length, lately presented to the Count by General Hancock, was placed at the centre of the upper side of the room, the frame of which was covered with laurels." — Ford's "Writings of Washington," VII, 200. "It has been said that Mrs. Hancock invited two hundred Boston women to accompany her to this dinner — possibly to return the French invasion of her own dining room. She used to say that at this time her husband 'kept 150 turkeys in the coach house, turning them out on Beacon Hill pasture in the daytime and diminishing their number by half each evening.' Levies for cake sometimes made upon neighbors were devoured by hungry midshipmen in the hall before it could reach the dining room, and had to be smuggled in under cover. Seventeen cups of tea were swallowed by one thirsty Frenchman." — Diary of Gen. William H. Sumner, in "Mag. Am. History," XIX, 504.

five hundred of the French allies. It is reported that by reason of the troublesome gout he was not able to be present at the town-meeting held next day. He recovered sufficiently to be busy in the General Court soon after and to preside in frequent town-meetings. His diplomatic hospitality had served its purpose in helping to restore good feeling between French and American leaders, ensuring a continuance of aid fron Louis XVI. So far this co-operation had not appeared to render much assistance in the field; but it had diverted and crippled forces of England which would have been turned against America. What Washington most desired was a detachment from the French army to co-operate with his own raw levies. This, Lafayette, seconded by d'Estaing, urged upon the king and Vergennes, and he was authorized to take the promise of a reinforcement to Washington on his return to America. Two months after his arrival seven ships of the line and three frigates brought six thousand troops to Newport under Count Rochambeau, that were to be followed by a second installment, which unfortunately never came, being blockaded at Brest by a British fleet.

Meantime a squadron from New York kept the allies' fleet and army idle for a year at Newport, unable to do anything for Washington. However, the French government had not been idle; and in the spring of 1781 it sent twenty-eight ships-of-the-line and six frigates carrying 20,000

men under Count de Grasse to act in concert with Washington and Rochambeau. The storm of war had been moving up from the South, and Cornwallis had encamped on Yorktown peninsula where he could be backed by a naval force that had thus far given the English their supremacy. Instead, it was a French fleet that drew up behind him, and kept the British ships at bay, while Washington hastened to the front to keep him in the pocket. The French troops and American together stormed British redoubts, and on the third day Cornwallis surrendered. The contest for liberty was practically over, and even the stubborn king was obliged to agree with his ministry that he was beaten.

So far as the final result was concerned no one at the time would have thought of giving John Hancock any credit for a hand in it. The French, however, were not insensible to the assistance which they gave in the crucial battle which put an end to British successes. Had it not been for Hancock's hospitable diplomacy even Lafayette might have found it impossible to restore a cordial understanding between the two countries. If it had been broken off, the war might have been prolonged so long as British ships could bring troops to a country that had no navy to protect its coasts and to supplement its army. The French have always, and with reason, claimed a large share of credit for the Yorktown surrender.

Hancock would not have distinguished himself there; but he deserves some recognition if he helped to preserve an alliance which secured that victory.

The whole matter of the important part which France bore in the war for independence is apt to be overlooked after a century and a third. It is not necessary here to inquire into the motives of those in high places, — as their hopes of trade and their hatred of England. The generous policy of Vergennes, the sacrifices of Beaumarchais, and the devotion of Lafayette may stand for the sentiments of the nation whose practical expression was in millions of treasure and supplies and thousands of soldiers when the American cause was, by Washington's own admission, on the brink of ruin. Eight months before the siege of Yorktown he said: "If the French do not come to our assistance speedily it will be too late, for we are at the end of our tether." They came, and by reason of their coming the surrender at Yorktown turned the scale in our favor, when without them the other alternative was more than probable. They might not have come if John Hancock had not made reparation for the rebuff which the first expedition received from his fellow citizens of Boston.[1]

There were other and less conspicuous services

[1] A list of ships, officers, and men is given in "Les Combattants Français de la Guerre Americaine," Paris, 1902.

which Hancock rendered the cause, as when he sent forward to General Washington that most needed and efficient disciplinarian, Baron Steuben, and his aides; furnishing them not only with vehicles from Boston, but also with funds.

CHAPTER XVII

FIRST GOVERNOR UNDER THE CONSTITUTION

Massachusetts in common with some other States turned to the framing of a Constitution when it appeared probable that the statehood which had been declared would become permanent. It has already been observed how much more important in its own opinion were the affairs of each State than those of the nebulous Union. This political system was in a formative stage, but the centripetal forces were slow in overcoming the centrifugal and in bringing repellent bodies around a common centre, which itself was vague and unformed. Hancock might have brought the federal idea into Massachusetts councils from what he had heard of it in Congress; but it is to be feared that he had heard there more about States' rights and their retention and maintenance, if he did not personally favor them to the prejudice of federation. Eight years were to pass before all the colonies should cease to consider themselves distinct republics; raising troops, making war on their own responsibility, and dealing with one another merely as allies in a common cause, but not as parts of an integral nation.

On the first of September, 1780, three hundred delegates to a Constitutional Convention met at Cambridge. Hancock was among the number representing Boston. After a general discussion of a Declaration of Rights and the appointment of a committee of thirty to prepare the Declaration and a Constitution of Government, and a sub-committee of three to make drafts and report, the Convention adjourned for six weeks. When it met again, on the 28th of October, two questions that elicited lively discussion indicate that the people were looking both backward and forward: first, in the debate about the support of ministers by the town, according to the old Puritan practice; and second, on the question of emancipating slaves and forbidding slave trade, to the incidental damage of the rum-distilling industry. Adjourning often for lack of a quorum, and reassembling from time to time, the Convention after six months evolved a Constitution, to be laid before the people of the State for a two-thirds vote of approval. To help secure this, it was accompanied by an explanatory address. By the first week in June it had been accepted by the towns, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts was more of a republic than ever, with the experiment of entire and unshared self-government before it for the ensuing eight years.

The first officer to be chosen was a governor. To this office John Hancock was elected by an over-

whelming majority, — of 11,000 out of 12,281 votes cast for seventeen candidates. There was some surprise that Samuel Adams was not chosen, in consideration of his eminent services in the cause of independence, and of his position in the Continental Congress, where he was still occupied. It would be charitable to think that his constituents were so sensible of his value to the federal cause that they would not tempt him to absence by calling him home to occupy the gubernatorial chair. It is to be feared, however, that less worthy considerations made for the success of his rival. Adams's friendly biographers have not hesitated to perpetuate the story that in the estrangement between the two men the supporters of Hancock had worked against Adams, with the former's consent. An additional explanation can be found in the fact that there was a reconstruction party which followed that of demolition to which Adams belonged, if he was not its creator, less radical and more conservative and constructive than his own. Politics, too, were succeeding to pure patriotism in the new order, and builders followed the wreckers. To his sympathizing wife Adams wrote a dignified letter with no note of disappointment at what she had deemed republican ingratitude. A few sentences will reveal the tone of it.

"Many circumstances have combined to make this election appear to be politically necessary. If the people

will watch over men whom they exalt to places of power I flatter myself that this will prove a happy choice. I wish that he may have the most faithful counsellors to assist him in the administration of affairs."

What Adams lacked in resentment has been supplied so long afterward that it is difficult to ascertain the exact grounds for charges against Hancock. Insinuations and general remarks about his vanity, caprice, and similar failings, with animosities for which there was some excuse, do not substantiate accusations of malicious disparagement of Adams through the agency of friends. If true, it was not the first instance, as it was not the last, in which political prejudices have found expression in terms not advantageous to the opposition; but the proof in this case is a matter of tradition rather than history, and much more vague than the vilification of Hancock by "Laco" in the campaign already mentioned; in which more definite detraction was printed than can be laid to the charge of Hancock or his friends with respect to Samuel Adams.[1] Passing over this political aspersion as incident to a political campaign, it is of more account to ask how Hancock entered upon the duties and responsibilities of the first governorship of the Common-

[1] Stephen Higginson condescended to add: "I might collect many handsome things to be said in his favor; but I mean not to notice either his failings or virtues in private life." — "Writings of Laco," p. 29.

wealth of Massachusetts on October 25, 1780. His inaugural address should be taken as outlining his disposition and policy in a new and trying condition of affairs. Previous to taking the oath of office he remarked to the assembly of both houses in the Council Chamber: —

"Honorable Gentlemen:

"It would have ill become me at so early a moment after being notified of my appointment by the respectable committee of this honorable assembly, to appear here to comply with the qualifying requisitions of the Constitution, had not the circumstances of the returns made the choice a matter of public notoriety some weeks past, and receiving it from such authority as confirmed its reality, led me to contemplate the subject; and, although fully sensible of my inability to the important purposes of the appointment, yet having, in the early stage of this contest, determined to devote my whole time and services to be employed in my country's cause to the utter exclusion of all private business, even to the end of the war, and being ever ready to obey the call of my country, I venture to offer myself; ready to comply with the requisitions of the Constitution, and regularly and punctually attend to the duties of the department in which my country has been pleased to place me."

The oath taken, he was declared Governor from the balcony of the State House. His first inaugural address then followed. A part of it is given here.

"Gentlemen of the Senate, and Gentlemen of the House of Representatives, —

"With a sincere and warm heart I congratulate you and my country on the singular favor of heaven in the peaceable

and auspicious settlement of our government upon a Constitution formed by the wisdom and sanctified by the solemn choice of the people who are to live under it. May the Supreme Ruler of the world be pleased to establish and perpetuate these new foundations of liberty and glory.

"Finding myself at the head of this Commonwealth by the free suffrages of its citizens, while I most sensibly feel the distinction they have conferred upon me in this election, I am at a loss to express sentiments of the gratitude with which it has impressed me. In addition to my natural affection for them, and the obligations they have before laid upon me, I have now a new and irresistible motive, ever to consider their happiness as my greatest interest, and their freedom my highest honor. . . .

"Of all the weighty business that lies before you, a point of the first importance and most pressing necessity is the establishment of the army in such consistency and force, and with such seasonable and competent supplies, as may render it, in conjunction with the respectable forces sent to our assistance by our powerful and generous ally, an effectual defence to the free Constitutions and independence of the United States.

"You cannot give too early or too serious attention to that proportion of this business that falls to the share of this Commonwealth. . . . The Commander-in-Chief, in whose abilities and integrity we justly repose the highest confidence, has repeatedly stated to us the necessity of an army engaged for the whole war. Nor should a moment of time be lost in establishing an object so essential to the preservation of our liberties. Care at the same time ought to be taken that the necessary supplies be committed to men on whose principles and affection to our great cause, as well as capacity for such service, we may safely depend.

"The support of the public faith stands in close connection with this measure of defence, and, indeed, is absolutely

necessary to it, and to the whole interest and honor of the State. No expedient should be unexplored to maintain our credit and remove all just ground of complaint from the army that protects us, or from those who have relied on public engagements. What friend to his country would not cheerfully bear his proportion of the expense necessary for this purpose?"

It will answer the present purpose to outline the substance of this Address from this point. He proceeds to emphasize the need of attention to methods of intercourse with Great Britain, and of care with regard to secret enemies at home and abroad, with the protection of seacoasts and commerce, as well as the defence of the western frontier. Support of the separation of legislative and judicial powers of the government is recommended; also an avoidance of any infringement of the rights of conscience; which evidently suggested a plea for the relief of the teachers of religion and morality who had suffered by the depreciation of currency; also for distressed widows and orphans of soldiers. A due observance of the Lord's Day, and the support of religious institutions, deserves the attention of civil government; also provision for the education of youth, established by the fathers, should be continued and increased in the care and patronage of public schools and the university at Cambridge. Early revision of the laws of the Commonwealth is recommended, with special reference to the militia,

and for the suppression of idleness, dissipation, extravagance, and the encouragement of their contrasting virtues. In all these measures he promised cheerful concurrence and every despatch in his power. He closed with these words: —

"May the new government diffuse a new animation through the whole political body; the people expect much from it, perhaps more in some points than circumstances will allow it to perform; but standing as we do upon their choice and affections, and strenuously exerting ourselves as we ought for their interest, they may find it happily advanced.

"May Heaven assist us to set out well, to brighten the auspices of our Constitution, to render it still more beloved and admired by the citizens of this Commonwealth, and to recommend it to the whole world by a wise and impartial, a firm and vigorous, administration of it."

Hancock's disposition led him to usher in the new government with a display which many considered unbecoming in a time of general depression. Others were glad of a few days' festivity in the prevailing want and financial distress, so long as it cost them little or nothing beyond appropriate dress for "the round of balls and glittering entertainments with which the new government was inaugurated." The Governor himself appeared in the elegant chariot which caused so much comment in Philadelphia two years before, when it was "attended by four servants in livery, mounted on fine horses richly caparisoned, and escorted by fifty horsemen with drawn sabres,

half of whom preceded and the other half followed his carriage." When plain Sam Adams heard of the reproduction of what he had seen in the Quaker city he wrote: "I am afraid there is more pomp and parade than is consistent with sober republican principle. . . . Why should this new era be introduced with entertainments expensive and tending to dissipate the minds of the people?" But this was Hancock's supreme hour. He had attained the highest political eminence possible to a civilian: he was going to make the most of it, for his own gratification and for the entertainment of his friends. His warehouse had been burned, but the British had not greatly damaged his mansion, and his fortune was not all gone.

Moreover, there was no lack of furnishings and table appointments suited to his lavish hospitality. The linen tablecloths and napkins in which the host took such pride he declared were "the most genteel in the country." Six dozen pewter plates, bearing his family crest, kept bright with daily use or polishing, were more to his liking than the "India china set, as it was softer and rattled less, and food was less apt to fall off." Much of his silver bore the Tower of London stamp. There were four dozen silver forks, the same number of spoons, several tankards of different sizes up to a gallon flagon which was devoted to hot punch and named for his friend Solomon Townsend — possibly in token of that worthy's

capacity and valor at the festive board. A silver porter-cup of half a gallon, whose two handles might have made it serve as a loving-cup passing from hand to hand; four silver chafing-dishes elaborately chased, as many butter-boats; asparagus tongs and half a dozen heavy silver candlesticks, with snuffers and trays to match; silver finger-bowls and salvers in their place and time, all together made table and sideboard resplendent. According to the taste of the day the fare matched the table furnishings. The codfish which he took pains to have from the Bay when he lived in Philadelphia and Baltimore was good enough for his spring Fast Day dinner; and the first salmon of the season, for which he paid a guinea was a delicacy on any feast day; albeit he by no means subsisted upon fish alone, as is evident from his purchasing-orders and complimentary remembrances to friends even as far away as London. People ate to live in those days, even if some of them lived to eat and to drink, thereby hastening their demise.

Apparel matched other splendors in the Hancock house. A hint of this can be seen in the scarlet velvet coat and white silk embroidered waistcoat preserved in the Old State House, supplemented in their day by silk of many colors and lace without end. The costliness of Mrs. Hancock's attire and its variety do not so much amaze the present-day woman, since between the adornment of

colonial dames, then and now, there is less difference than between that of their respective consorts. A wedding fan of white kid, painted in Paris with appropriate designs, and a piece of muslin, costing in India six dollars a yard before it left the loom, will appear extravagant to some. Other women may think that Mrs. Hancock was moderate in her expenditures. It is a matter of comparative ability among contemporaries. At this time Hancock kept the reputation of being one of the wealthiest citizens in a town where everybody had suffered losses, and all values had been depleted by the distresses of war years.[1] The first of them had interrupted business with London and other foreign ports. Accounts could not be adjusted with agents nor collections made abroad; while at home great losses occurred in the depreciation of paper currency, which the States found it easier to print than to redeem. Hancock lost thousands of pounds sterling, which should be placed to the credit of his patriotism in a time when, as in recent wars, there were many who talked noisily for a cause which made them rich through its necessities and their own greed. History remembers its military heroes, but forgets the men who furnish arms and ammunition.

[1] An account of the damages done to Hancock's estate by the British army, dated Feb. 28, 1777, to the amount of £4737, 1, 8¾, is contained in the "Chamberlain Ms.," No. 255, Boston Public Library.

After a decade Hancock's public service occupied so much of his time and attention that he turned his business affairs over to an agent, William Hoskins, to act for him at home and abroad. His native town and State had conferred their highest honors upon him, and the return he made was such as he could best render for values received; even though it went further with the populace than its cost would have gone with a needy army. If it also gratified his vanity and contributed to his popularity and political success, that was his partial compensation for what he lavished. Because he was vain and sometimes capricious it is not necessary to assert that every generous act of his was to win applause; since until his governorship, and even the later treaty of peace, the outlook for any prominent patriot was far from assuring.[1] Nor did the governor of the new State find conditions vastly improved over those of the old colony. The inhabitants had not changed their nature with their political constitution. Depression and discontent prevailed in the land, privation and distress in the army. In New England courage and determination slackened

[1] Doubtless there was great appreciation of John Hancock's services to the cause on the evening of March 4th, 1784, when he entertained "His Honor, the Lieut. Governor, the Council, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House, together with a number of other respectable gentlemen," on the occasion of celebrating the treaty of peace with Great Britain. — Ayer's "Early Days on Boston Common," p. 38.

after disasters in the South, and there was a growing desire for peace in some sections which were getting ready to accept liberal terms of settlement, without express acknowledgment of independence, which the British Ministry offered.

Although Massachusetts did not propose such abandoning of its steadfast purpose, it had troubles of its own ambushed in the near future. The cessation of hostilities soon after Cornwallis's surrender by no means ended embarrassments for the governor of a State. War had brought new evils which were to flourish after its close. Privateering and speculation and war-contracts had made rich, daring, and venturesome men, creating distinctions of wealth, breeding discontent between classes and masses, town and country people. Back in the western counties strife was brewing over taxation and debt. Courts were menaced with violence in Springfield and Northampton. Armed malcontents assembled in the field against State forces, which they captured, and released in Hadley by the riverside, to be themselves made captive in turn by the militia and dispersed; but the mob-spirit was not annihilated. It would soon break out again. The causes of discontent were increasing. The year 1780 was one of disasters. In the South Charleston had surrendered, and the State was overrun by the British. Gates had been ignominiously defeated. It was the dark hour before daybreak,

and no one as yet saw a streak of dawn. Four years had passed since independence was declared, but the States were neither free nor united. Congress was deteriorating; there was no efficient administration; the conduct of the war languished; resources and energies were wasted.

The symptom of general depression which was most evident was the financial condition. It was easier to issue paper currency than to give it much value; so Congress printed more and more of it until, as Washington said, it took a wagon load of money to buy a wagon load of provisions. "Not worth a Continental" is a phrase which has come down from the month of Hancock's first inauguration, when it took ten paper dollars to make a cent; when Indian corn was sold at wholesale in Boston for $150,00 a bushel, butter at $12,00 a pound, tea $90,00, sugar, $10,00, beef $8,00 and a barrel of flour at $1575,00.[1] If the poor and prudent Samuel Adams paid $2,000 for a hat and a suit of clothes, what might John Hancock's annual outfit have cost? is a problem to be computed by logarithmic calculation or by the cart-load of paper money. Of course this variable and almost valueless currency was a boon to impecunious debtors when no agreement had been made with their creditors about standards in payment. He was poor indeed and honest who would not discharge a debt of a thousand dollars

[1] Trevelyan's "George III. and Charles Fox," I, 272.

with ten in gold; but many did this to the ruin of friends who had trusted to their honor and to the financial standing of a confederacy which was not yet a nation among the nations of the earth.

It has been seen that the first governor urged making efforts to maintain the credit of the State. These were not very successful. The General Court's appeal to the people contained suggestive words about "giving up every consideration of *private* advantage, and the *inattention* or *avarice* of any part of the community." £950,000 was the estimate of what would be required by the State for the year 1781. The means proposed to meet this need were uncollected taxes, sales of Loyalists' estates, a direct tax of £320,000, and borrowing the remainder. In addition, Congress called on Massachusetts for its proportion of war assessment, amounting to almost $2,000,000. Taken all together it was a staggering burden for a poverty-stricken State, whose industries had been crippled by British oppression and war. In their despair some attempted to interfere with the administration of justice and enforcement of the laws; but the intelligence and fidelity of the better part prevailed. The next year the State was obliged to borrow, paying the troops what it could, and hoping for a return from the United States sometime in the future.[1]

[1] The war cost England still more, — the loss of thirteen colonies and four islands, and more than £70,000,000. It was an

When the war ended in the spring of 1783 there was great rejoicing, but financial troubles were not over. The public debt was so large that many said it would be impossible to pay it, and they saw no way out but by repudiation, to the loss of creditors and the destitution of returned soldiers. Governor Hancock urged the General Court to make immediate provision for paying officers and soldiers a part at least of their dues, reminding legislators of "the obligations of the country for meritorious services which should never be forgotten." Upon his recommendation an additional tax of $470,000 was voted for this purpose. Soldiers' certificates for wages were at this time bringing only twelve and a half cents on the dollar; a mere pittance for their services and sufferings. All these circumstances, severally and together, caused a widespread discontent; which was not allayed by the call in 1784 for $1,800,000 as the State's share of a congressional assessment upon the country for that year, with $95,000 more to satisfy immediate demands to pay interest due and an installment on a debt in Europe for funds borrowed by Franklin for the State. At this time also questions of state sovereignty and the rights of refugees to their property abandoned in flight

expensive defence of "the right" to tax colonists, followed by failure. Marks' "England and America," II, 1057.

England's debt was increased by the American war £115,654,000 up to January, 1783. Rose's "William Pitt and National Revival," I, 179.

caused discussions which added to the burdens of the executive office. After five years in it Hancock's health became seriously affected, and in the winter of 1785 he deemed it prudent to resign.[1] No doubt his withdrawal, if not his malady, was hastened by complaints of the discontented that stronger measures had not been employed and more promptly to collect the public taxes. It was an instance of forbearance and leniency against necessity and duty. Some were quick to impute such clemency to a love of popularity or a lack of firmness in his administration. It is more probable that he saw a storm gathering which he could not avert, and had not the physical strength to weather, and so was willing to let a rival candidate in a former election take his turn in an ominous year. James Bowdoin was elected his successor in May, 1785. At the same time Hancock was chosen one of the representatives to the General Court, and afterward a delegate to Congress again, where he was elected its president once more for the short time that he remained. He had only to appear as a member of a deliberative body to be chosen to preside over it. When it is remembered what a test of fairness and good temper such a position is, it is strong evidence of their possession that he was repeatedly called

[1] The original draft of his resignation message, Jan. 27, 1785, is found in the "Chamberlain Ms." No. 286, Boston Public Library.

to the chairmanship of this and that assembly, from town-meetings to the Federal Congress.

Governor Bowdoin had been elected by the Legislature, as there was no choice by the people in a divided ballot. He took the chair in a critical time, knowing the difficulties that would beset him. A State debt of $10,000,000, with no system of credit, resources exhausted, and discontent prevailing made the situation full of anxiety. His first appeal was to maintain the credit of the State by punctual payment of interest and the diminution of public debt; also for industry, retrenchment, and economy: all of which the Legislature received with approbation and resolves of co-operation. But the people were to be heard from. The prospect of raising $333,000 annually for fifteen years to clear off their debts was appalling; and the lawless element rose in arms against the authority of the State and of the courts in order to delay payment of personal debts. The lower class of malcontents chose two captains who had seen service, and threatened court houses, causing the justices to adjourn trials. The militia was called out in the eastern counties to disperse insurgents, but the courts deemed it prudent to discontinue business. A law was passed against riots, the writ of habeas corpus was suspended, and the governor was requested to hold the militia in readiness to protect the courts. At the same time pardon was offered for past

disorderly offences on the promise of allegiance to the commonwealth. The lawless misinterpreted this forbearance, and the violent urged "bringing the government to terms" by marching to the capital and liberating friends who were held for trial. Instead, three hundred marched to Springfield and took possession of the court house, where their number was increased to two thousand. Then they advanced toward the arsenal, to find General Shepard with a thousand militiamen in possession. After the first volley the rioters fled to the next town with a loss of three killed. On the arrival of militia reinforcements, which under General Lincoln quelled another uprising in Berkshire, the rebels were dispersed, after one hundred and fifty had been captured, the ringleaders leaving the State for their safety. By the prudence and firmness of the governor, supported by the Legislature and the militia, most of whom were more distressed than the rebellious mob, the limits of personal freedom in the State were defined and license rebuked. Fourteen were sentenced to die, of whom eight were afterward pardoned, and the others reprieved. Thus ended Shays' Rebellion, quelled by the vigor of James Bowdoin.

As to what John Hancock would have done with it there were diverse opinions. Generally it was conceded that in his state of infirm health, and with his lenient spirit, joined to his regard for favor among all classes, it was worldly wisdom in him

to be free from official responsibility in this perilous juncture. But there was no wind that did not blow some good to him. Governor Bowdoin's decision and promptness, which saved the State, was contrasted by the restless with the milder course which Hancock might have pursued, without considering its disastrous consequences to the people at large. Accordingly, the disgruntled were ready to avenge themselves at the next election by throwing Bowdoin over and choosing Hancock, who had now conveniently recovered so far that he dared undertake a peaceful administration. It was also thought that he would "favor more indulgent measures towards the people in deferring the collection of taxes and in the payment of the public debt." He had by no means countenanced disorder, but was considered more compassionate or patient in the distressed condition of the people. The popular approval of his candidacy was measured by the large majority of votes which he received, although Governor Bowdoin had a generous support, probably from the more respectable voters.

Early in this administration Governor Hancock won praise by relinquishing a third of his salary at a time when a committee was considering the expediency of reducing certain official stipends. It was a good example, which fortunately he was able to set; but he wished that it might not be considered as holding for over one year. When

in the following year he intimated his wish for a return to the original amount, the Legislature prolonged his temporary benevolence by not granting his desire. Governor Bowdoin did not listen to a similar suggestion in his administration, and it was reported that his successor regretted that he had not pursued the same course. The difference between voluntary generosity and involuntary became inconveniently apparent the second year, with an unusual application of the adage, "He gives twice who gives promptly."

The Federal Constitution was before the States for approval at this time, and was laid before the Massachusetts Legislature by the governor with commendatory words on the result of wise deliberation in Congress, in a conciliatory spirit, by some of the ablest men in the Union; and he suggested calling a convention to consider its approval.

Three hundred and sixty delegates assembled in January, 1788, and chose Governor Hancock to preside. Opposition to the Constitution appeared at once as abridging the prerogatives of State legislatures and giving too much power to Congress. State sovereignty and State separatism were convictions not easily eradicated. Sectional antagonism came to the front over the provision to count five slaves as three freemen in apportioning the number of representatives from the southern States. As the discussion went on it came to be understood that the government would be partly federal and

partly national. National in matters relating to the welfare of the Union: federal in its powers for specific purposes to which no single State was competent. Opponents were at first in the majority, and might have succeeded in rejecting the Constitution if Governor Hancock had not proposed that several articles embodying suggestions that had been made during the debate of three weeks should be recommended for incorporation in the Constitution. In the hope that these definitive and restrictive amendments might be adopted several were induced to vote for ratification; and the endorsement finally passed by a small majority. The wisdom of Hancock's action was confirmed in the approval of the suggested amendments by two-thirds of the States and the incorporation of these provisions into the Constitution. They were not altogether of his devising: he did not pose as a statesman; but he had the tact and influence and wisdom to guide a many-minded assembly into the best way out of difficulty and to the saving of the confederacy from practical dissolution.

At this point it is proper to notice a charge made against him at the time by his political enemies, which has been perpetuated in tradition and narrative.

When the Convention assembled the Federalist friends of the Constitution had extreme doubts about its acceptance. The opposition were reasonably confident of its rejection. Not until the

scheme of amendments was devised could much favorable progress be made. To give weight to the proposal it was deemed advisable to have it emanate from some one occupying a neutral position, having the confidence of the people and with great influence over them. Hancock, president of the Convention, was selected as such a man. Up to the amendment device he had not declared for the Constitution nor had he appeared in the chair. His detractors said that his convenient gout kept him at home and added, that he was induced to attend at last by promises of support at the next gubernatorial election and of nomination to the vice-presidency, which had already been talked of, especially in the South. His friends might have answered, that he was suffering greatly in these last years, but came in spite of his infirmities, and that if promises of preferment were made, it was not the first instance of political methods of persuasion, as it was by no means to be the last. The truth is, that in so momentous a question Hancock was no more hesitant than the Convention itself, a majority of which was at first, Sam Adams among the number, opposed to the Constitution. When the prejudices of some were modified by qualifying amendments, formulated by Federalist leaders, Hancock saw a possible settlement of the question. Then he was encouraged to propose and defend the added provisions, leaving the chair and taking

the floor for this purpose, with such success that even Samuel Adams was induced to move their adoption. A sufficient number were also persuaded to side with the Federalists to carry the ratification by nineteen votes out of a total of three hundred and fifty-five; so narrow a majority as to indicate that there were still many doubts as to the expediency of a constitutional government. When, however, the measure was finally carried the opposition gracefully and rapidly acquiesced, and great was the rejoicing in Boston and throughout the Commonwealth.

A result of still greater consequence followed in the endorsement of the Constitution by States which had waited to see how Massachusetts would go; whose lead would have been followed in rejecting as readily as in accepting a union.

If, then, the constitutional union of States depended upon the decision of Massachusetts, as the record shows; and if this decision was brought about by the instrumentality of John Hancock, what measure of credit can fairly be accorded him for his share in saving the Republic in its infancy? Grant that he was merely a hinge on which the stupendous issue slowly turned; there was enough of force in it to swing open the portal for a broadening future of liberty and union under a constitution, instead of disintegration under a loose confederacy of petty principalities. Say that he was no more than the pivot on which

the scale-bar trembles and wavers; but when his words and influence were thrown into the right scale was he a mere spokesman of the Federalists, or once more a deliverer of discordant States from eventual separation? He had helped to keep up the French alliance in a time when it might have been dissolved to the loss of our independence. Now, he more than assisted in making liberty continuous in a united nation. If he was not a great man he was most fortunate in standing at the parting of the ways and in pointing out the direction in which victory and perpetuity were eventually found to lie. If his presence, his influence, his urbanity, his personality, had been absent on two critical occasions at least, the fortunes of the country might have been great misfortunes. Let him have the honor that is his due.[1] The following extract from his Message to the Legislature of Massachusetts in 1790, copied from the manuscript in the Greenough collection, is an illustration of his attitude.

"I congratulate you, Gentlemen, on the accession of another State to our Union; and am happy to say, that I am persuaded that the Wisdom and tried patriotism of the

[1] For accounts of this incident compare Hannis Taylor's "Origin and Growth of the American Constitution," pp. 209, 210; Judson's "Lives of the Signers," p. 29; Bancroft's "Constitutional History of the United States," II, 258, note 2; G. T. Curtis's "Constitutional History," I, 653; and for adverse testimony, Harding's "Constitution in Massachusetts, Harvard Historical Studies," II, c. 5.

Citizens of Rhode Island will very soon compleat the Union of all the Independent States of America under the System of General, National Government; the administration of which cannot fail to establish peace and harmony between them at home. . . .

"I congratulate you with great pleasure, Gentlemen, upon the happy situation of our Country. But the pleasing prospects afforded by divine Providence, ought not by any means to be the occasion of our relaxing in our endeavors for the public weal." . . .

As if in recompense his own State was almost the first to profit by the new order. On the adjustment of claims for advances made to the government it was found that Massachusetts had already paid a large proportion of her dues, leaving a small amount to be met. Taxes being reduced, prosperity followed a new stability under the Union. Soldiers who had been able to keep their certificates were having them paid, principal and interest; good feeling was restored, and the Governor's customary good fortune returned with his re-occupation of the gubernatorial chair, to which he was again elected the following year.

Prosperity, however, has its dangers; as when his arbitrary treatment of Lieutenant-governor Lincoln recalled his occasional sobriquet of "King Hancock." It might have been a pique at the general's successful quelling of Shays' rebellion; but whatever the cause, his conduct towards Lincoln was ungenerous to say the least. The lieutenant-governor, as such, received no salary;

but had usually been appointed commander of the Castle with a thousand dollars compensation for his services. Governor Hancock did not appoint General Lincoln to the command. When inquiry was made by the Legislature, the Governor replied that he had the sole right to appoint, and that it was for him to decide whether or not he would have anyone to command the Castle. He may have had the legislative economy in mind by which his own salary was cut down; but this was the arbitrary act of one man in power; by which he deservedly lost many friends. A committee was formed which reported in favor of a salary of six hundred dollars; that sum Hancock's party in the House reduced to five hundred and thirty-three dollars. However, his arbitrary act was rebuked by this vote of the General Court.[1]

With better grace he endorsed what may have been an over-statement of his real sentiments in an address to President Washington at his inauguration in April, 1781, in which gratitude was expressed for his services, admiration of his character, confidence in his wisdom, and the expectation of justice, fortitude, and patriotism in his adminis-

[1] He fared worse himself. On the 16th December, 1778, Congress "took into consideration the proper allowance for the honorable gentlemen who had served as President, and they were asked to lay before the treasury board an account of their expenditures." Hancock, however, had gone home. There is no record of his having received any compensation for his services. — "Journals of Congress," III, 157.

tration; to which were added congratulations and prayers for the divine protection and blessing.

In his first message to the Legislature after the federal government was established he spoke of the benefits to be expected from it to the nation and the State, and commended it to the confidence and support of the people; also the practice of private and social virtues, the encouragement of learning and education as necessary to a free government. "Our wise and magnanimous ancestors were very careful and liberal in the establishment of institutions for this purpose, among which the University in Cambridge, and grammar schools in the several towns, were believed highly important. Every necessary attention, I trust, will be paid to the former; and I cannot but earnestly recommend to your inquiry the reason the latter is so much neglected in the State." The last part of this sentence is not so noticeable as his commendation of Harvard College at a time when it was weary with making requests to him as its treasurer for a settlement of neglected accounts. Nevertheless it returned his compliment, as will be noted later. His suggestion of provision for common schools was followed by reviving an early statute, by which towns of two hundred families were required to employ graduate teachers who could interest youth in the Latin and Greek languages; and in smaller towns teachers were to have a correct knowledge of English. So

much he did toward the revival of learning in New England.

At this session the Legislature complimented the governor by naming one of the two new counties in the Maine district for himself and the other for Washington, with whom the governor was doubtless pleased to be associated.[1] Still, his notion of the respective dignity of State and Federal executives would make the honor of this connection reciprocal. To what extent he held such comfortable views was illustrated on the occasion of Washington's visit to New England soon after his taking the presidential office.[2]

After Hancock's return from the presidency of Congress and his election to the chief magistracy of his native State, his opinion of his own position could not have been impaired. He had arrived at what in those days was a greater distinction

[1] A town in Berkshire County was named for him in 1776, also one in New Hampshire in 1779, and another in Vermont in 1778. Also in the Public Records of Connecticut, I, 430, mention is made of the war vessel "Hancock."

[2] To a Frenchman visiting in the country in 1788 he gave this impression: "You know the great sacrifices he made in the Revolution, and the boldness with which he declared himself at the beginning of the insurrection. The same spirit of patriotism animates him still. A great generosity, united to a vast ambition, forms his character: he has the virtues and the address of popularism; that is to say, that without effort he shows himself the equal and the friend of all. Mr. Hancock is amiable and polite when he wishes to be; but they say he does not always wish it." —Brissot de Warville's "New Travels in the U. S.," cited in "Old Boston Days and Ways," p. 373.

than any except military chieftainship. He had attained to civic eminence, since there was no greater political honor than to be Governor of Massachusetts in the years before the war closed, the confederation completed, and a President of the United States elected. Even then there was a general disposition to magnify the relative importance of a sovereign State in comparison with that of the new nation; for it will be remembered that the untried federation was regarded with doubt and suspicion by many besides Samuel Adams. It was therefore a debatable question whether the president of an assemblage of naturally repellent principalities had as yet the definite authority and prestige with which nearly two centuries of custom had clothed the august person of the chief magistrate of Massachusetts.[1]

Hancock had now for nine years been the successor to a long and distinguished line of governors and was the first in the new State as the successor to the Province, with little change in externals, when the newly elected President of the recently and loosely united States was approach-

[1] In a letter to General Washington General Lincoln discussed Hancock's chances for the Vice-Presidency: "Governor Hancock and Mr. John Adams are considered as the candidates for that office. . . . The latter in my opinion will be the man; for I cannot believe that the Governor would, under his present state of health, leave this government, even if he should be elected second in the new one." — Sparks' "Writings of Washington, Miscellaneous Letters," IX, 557.

ing Boston with a retinue which now-a-days would not be considered as republican in simplicity.[1] In addition to two secretaries and six servants deputations, military and civil, had furnished escort from the State border at Springfield through Worcester to Cambridge, where he was met by Samuel Adams and the Governor's Council at ten o'clock on Saturday, October 24, with an invitation to dine with Governor Hancock when he should reach Boston. On Washington's arriving at the Neck he was met by the selectmen; but at the town line where he expected to meet the Governor his excellency did not appear. There was an embarrassing delay for his possible arrival: the day was cold and raw; his suite mounted and

[1] Hancock had entertained Lafayette on his triumphal progress through the country in 1784. After Washington had entered the State he received the following letter from Governor Hancock: —

"Sir, "Boston 21 October, 1789.

"Having received information that you intended to honor this State with a visit, and wishing personally to show you every mark of attention, which the most sincere friendship can induce, I beg the favor of your making my house the place of your residence while you remain in Boston. I could wish, that accommodations were better suited to a gentleman of your respectability, but you may be assured that nothing on my part shall be wanting to make them as agreeable as possible.

"As governor of the commonwealth I feel it to be my duty to receive your visit with such tokens of respect, as may answer the expectations of my constituents, and may in some measure express the high sentiments of respect they feel towards you. I have therefore issued orders for proper escorts to attend you, etc. etc." — Sparks' "Writings of Washington," x, 48, 489.

waiting to enter the town. At length when it was reported that the Governor was not likely to show himself, the President inquired if there was no other road to the town, and was about to turn back when he was informed that the municipal authorities were awaiting him. Out of respect to them he passed on between lines of citizens "classed in their different professions and under their own banners," amidst acclamations of the people to the State House. There he asked if the Governor was in his room above; because if he were he should not ascend the stairs. Being assured that he was not, he went up to the balcony, conducted by the Lieutenant-governor and council, saw the long procession pass, and then went to the lodgings secured for him "at widow Ingersoll's, which is a very decent and good house." Thither a messenger came from the Governor to say that dinner was waiting. He returned with a reply that the President would dine at his lodgings. Washington wrote in his diary: —

"Having engaged yesterday to take an informal dinner with the Gov'r to-day, but under full persuasion that he should have waited upon me as soon as I should have arrived, I excused myself upon his not doing it, and informing me thro' his Secretary that he was too much indisposed to do it, being resolved to *receive* the visit. Dined at my lodgings where the Vice-President favored me with his company." [1]

[1] Hancock's rigid adherence to etiquette is mentioned in the Monroe Correspondence, "Bulletin of Rolls, Dept. of State," No. 2, 112.

When the populace understood the situation they voiced their resentment of this indignity towards the nation's head; for the town was strongly federal in its sentiments, and moreover it had not forgotten its deliverance from the British thirteen years before, as a panelled arch and canopy by the State House signified, bearing the inscription — "Boston relieved March 17, 1776." The town would have been glad to entertain the President if it had not understood that the Governor claimed the honor. To have Washington dine at his lodgings mortified municipal pride, as reflecting upon its sense of honor and gratitude due to the beloved head of the nation.

Hancock's popularity was in peril. By evening he knew that he must make amends to recover lost favor. Accordingly two members of his council were sent with explanations and apologies, saying in the Governor's behalf that he was not well; to which the President replied: "Gentlemen, I am a frank man and will be frank on this occasion. For myself, you will believe me, I do not regard ceremony; but there is an etiquette due my office which I am not at liberty to waive. My claim to the attention that has been omitted rests upon the question whether the whole is greater than a part. I am told that the course taken has been designed, and that the subject was considered in Council." This was denied; but it was admitted that it had been observed that the President of the

United States was one person and the ambassador of the French republic another. "Why that remark, sir, if the subject was not before the Council? This circumstance has been so disagreeable and mortifying, that I must say, notwithstanding all the marks of respect and affection received from the inhabitants of Boston, had I anticipated it, I would have avoided the place."

Governor Hancock was then advised by his friends, after consultation on the matter by them, to reconsider his action and waive his view of etiquette; whereupon he wrote: —

"Sunday, 26 October, half past twelve o'clock.

"The Governor's best respects to the President. If at home, and at leisure, the Governor will do himself the honor to pay his respects in half an hour. This would have been done much sooner, had his health in any degree permitted. He now hazards everything, as it respects his health, for the desirable purpose."

To this Washington replied: —

"Sunday, 26 October, one o'clock.

"The President of the United States presents his best respects to the Governor, and has the honor to inform him that he shall be at home till two o'clock. The President needs not express the pleasure it will give him to see the Governor; but, at the same time, he most earnestly begs that the Governor will not hazard his health on the occasion."

Swathed in red baize, Hancock rode in his coach to Washington's lodging house at the corner of Tremont and Court streets where he was borne

in the arms of attendants to the President's apartments. Washington accepted Hancock's invitation to dine with him; also another from the State authorities to a public dinner at which Hancock was not present; as he could not be consistently with his severe and dramatic attack of the gout. It had served him a good turn in covering his retreat from high official ground; which Washington had held on his part with equal tenacity on this and other occasions, as was his well-known custom. But having yielded to the clamor of the town at "the hazard of everything as it respects his health," Hancock evidently considered that he had discharged all official obligation.[1]

[1] Ford states that Washington sent Major Jackson with a note to Hancock saying that "if his health permitted him to receive company, it would admit of his visiting the President;" which hardly follows. He also terms this encounter "an amusing exchange of words." — "Writings of Washington," XI, 446, note. With more discrimination H. C. Lodge says that "it had a good deal more real importance than such points of etiquette generally possess." — "Historic Towns," — Boston,' p. 175. In Lodge's "Life of Washington" there is another account of this incident. Tudor in his "Life of Otis" ascribes it to the influence of men indifferent or inimical to a federal government, and says that Hancock regretted his mistake and subsequently endeavored to remove the impression it created.

"The two most prominent men in New England after the Vice President (John Adams) were John Hancock and Sam Adams. They were decided Republicans," — that is, as opposed to Federalists, — "and so were almost all the distinguished talent of the Southern states and three quarters of the American people" — at the time of Hancock's death. — Randall's "Life of Jeffer-

The entire episode would be amusing if it were merely a matter of personal etiquette between two gentlemen of the old school. Added to this, however, was the underlying sense of each as to what he represented. From Washington's viewpoint the aggregation of States was greater than one of them. Hancock regarded the age and stability and prestige of Massachusetts as superior to the "rope of sand" which held the new federation together, or the untested chain whose weak links might soon be discovered. Or if he agreed with Washington that "the whole is greater than a part," he had some reason to think that he had been overlooked a second time when the chief magistracy of the country had been given to eminence in arms rather than in civil affairs; as has happened after wars since the Revolution.

In the instance of the first presidential election Washington's qualifications were so supreme that competition with the commander-in-chief would not have been thought of by any man of just self-estimation, or by any one who could rightly weigh the nation's general sentiments of gratitude and esteem. The verdict of time endorses the judgment of contemporaries that Washington was both a great general and a wise president, which cannot be said of some of his successors.

son," II, 165, note. In 1785 "Mr. Hancock was talked of by the Southern States for President." — Calendar of Madison Correspondence, "Bulletin of the Bureau of Rolls," No. 4, pp. 33, 35.

This ceremonial episode does not appear to have permanently injured Governor Hancock's popularity. The "Centinel" of that week coupled his name with Washington's in verse which ran: —

"Thou, too, illustrious Hancock! by his side
In every lowering hour of danger tried;
With him conspicuous o'er the beamy page,
Descend, the theme of every future age.
When first the sword of early war we drew,
The king, presaging, fixed his eye on you;
'Twas your dread finger pressed the sacred seal
Whence rose to sovereign power the public weal!"

Poetry, truth, and praise are not without their drawbacks here; but doubtless they had their customary worth in a time when printed matter was accepted at its face value. Besides, the descendants of Puritans, like their forefathers, had a shamefaced fondness for poor verse if of domestic manufacture. For the standard foreign brands they had neither appreciation nor toleration.[1]

[1] One Chapman Whitcomb was inspired to write a eulogy on Hancock in 1795 beginning: —

"Jove armed with thunder, ne'er appeared so great."

Benjamin Austin also apostrophized him in the style of his day. Both may be found in Loring's "Hundred Boston Orators," p. 122. The wife of a Connecticut soldier also showed her appreciation when she named her triplet sons John Hancock, George Washington, and Charles Lee. — "Public Records of Connecticut," p. 430.

CHAPTER XVIII

TREASURER OF HARVARD COLLEGE

In the diminution of his fortune and the increased outlay incident to the chief magistracy of Massachusetts Hancock wrote, on September 24, 1781, to Robert Morris, the financier of the Revolution, with regard to reimbursement for outlays attending his presidency of Congress: —

"Pray my friend, when will be the properest time for me to be considered for my expenses, while President of Congress? They wrote me on the subject some two years ago, but I waived troubling them, knowing the delicacy of their situation. Indeed, I kept no account of my expenses; nor had I time for it, as you well know how my time was engrossed, and the labors and fatigue I underwent, and the expenses I must have necessarily incurred. I can speak plain to you; confident I am that fifteen hundred pounds sterling would not amount to the expenses I incurred as president. In this I think I merit consideration, more especially as grants have been made to all my successors."

It is not known that he ever received compensation for his labors during the two and a half years of his service as President of the Continental Congress. It will do no harm to keep this in mind; and particularly his statement that he kept no account of his expenses in the engrossment of his

time amidst the labor and fatigue of his office, since what has been regarded as a sad dereliction in a place of trust must not be passed over, as an instance of undertaking too many responsibilities at once. This may be an explanation; but it cannot serve as a justification of a course pursued for years which a resignation of the treasurership of Harvard College would have made impossible.

As far back as 1773, in fulfilling the liberal intention of his uncle Thomas, and by adding something of his own, Hancock had gained the credit of being a generous benefactor to the college. The most popular man in the Province, wealthy, liberal, and patriotic, he was considered as a most desirable person to be connected with the monetary affairs of the institution. Its funds would be secured by his ample fortune; his integrity was undoubted. But soon after his election it was discovered that these qualifications were not all that were required in a college treasurer at that time. Attention to business, and keeping accounts in such order that the condition of the treasury could be known on demand, were found to be of more consequence than personal riches and popularity. Neglect of those unpretentious virtues was as perilous as dishonesty. It was unfortunate for Harvard that the patriotism of its treasurer diverted his attention from its financial affairs to the larger sphere of congressional business. His own business was slack enough in the days of the Port Bill and

the siege; but when he was elected President of Congress the concerns of the college doubtless seemed remote and inferior to those of the country at large, with its legislation and warfare. Accounting for funds and paying salaries of college professors was a petty occupation compared with official correspondence, and presiding over a Congress which represented the whole country. He could have easily thrown off the lesser responsibility, and the college stood ready to concur in a year after his appointment. His first mistake was in not disencumbering himself of this burden.

That he did not do this was not for the lack of hints and requests. At an early day President Langdon, who had been elected by the Corporation at a meeting held at Hancock's house, wrote him urging the importance of an immediate statement and settlement. No answer was received to this suggestion. Two months later another appeal was sent with the same result. A third letter couched in the most considerate terms and entreating a reply elicited the information that "Mr. Hancock is busily engaged, and will soon appoint a day to attend to the business." Not appearing on the day appointed, he postponed the matter to the next week; when he did not arrive. Another entreaty to settle before he should leave town, and to leave his accounts with college authorities, called out no reply. Then they voted that Colonel Hancock be requested to deliver moneys, bonds,

and other papers belonging to the college treasury into the hands of the President, or of others specified, and take a receipt for the same. A messenger took this request, and Hancock could not escape returning something. It was the following letter:—

"Mr. Hancock presents his compliments to the Rev. President, and the other gentlemen, who were present yesterday at the meeting, and acquaints them, that he has at heart the interest of the College as much as any one, and will pursue it. He is much surprised and astonished at the contents of the President's letter, *as well as at the doings of the gentlemen present, which he very seriously resents;* and however great the gentlemen may think the burden upon his mind may be, Mr. Hancock is not disposed to look upon it in that light, nor shall the College suffer any detriment, in his absence, as he has already determined those matters; but if the gentlemen choose to make *a public choice* of a gentleman to the displacing him, they will please act their pleasure. Mr. Hancock writes in great hurry, being much engaged, but shall write very particularly, or be at Cambridge in person, as soon as the Congress rises; *he leaves all his matters in the hands of a gentleman of approved integrity*, during his absence, which he is not disposed to alter, and peradventure his absence may not be longer *than a voyage to Machias.*

"Concord, 3 o'clock, P.M., 11 April, 1775."

In ten days he started for Philadelphia, and the Corporation was silenced for three-quarters of a year; but they appointed the President receiver of rents from their real estate, of legacies and donations, and of the Charlestown ferry earnings; "the Treasurer having been long absent and there being no expectation of his speedy return."

Conditions becoming insupportable by March, 1776, another supplicatory letter, begging "a moment's attention, reluctant to interrupt Mr. Hancock, engaged in momentous affairs, on which the salvation of the United Colonies depends, just to mention the difficulties of the seminary of learning." . . . It was a humble and pitiful statement of ruin, defacement by troops, dispersion of students, with no income available, and no treasurer to receive what little could be collected. No answer was received. Another month and another letter. Lame apologies were returned in three weeks, with the information that Mr. Hancock had sent a messenger to Boston to bring all the books and papers across the country to Philadelphia for his arrangement. By a shrewd suggestion he placed the responsiblity of requesting his resignation upon the College. With many obeisances they tried to throw this upon his sense of duty to the College and the country, with the possibility of reconciling both; intimating as plainly as they dared their wish that he would resign. After three months a committee was appointed, which in a week evolved another letter that in seven weeks drew a reply which left them to consider further what to do with the evasive treasurer. They sent tutor Hall to Philadelphia for the College papers. Two months afterward these were in the Corporation's possession with bonds and other obligations amounting to £16,000. Then they were bold enough to vote,

after a complimentary preamble, that it was "highly expedient that another treasurer, who shall constantly reside within the State, be elected in the stead, or in the place of Mr. Hancock." But they were too timid to elect another until he should resign. Three meetings were held to prepare an answer to a letter which Hall brought with the securities. This reply consisted of twenty-eight pages of justification of the Corporation's action. Hancock took no notice of it or their vote. After three months more of waiting the authorities "proceeded to elect Ebenezer Storer, Esquire, in the room of the Honorable John Hancock"; who regarded this action as a personal affront and never forgave the Corporation.

To conciliate him they entreated him to present his portrait, "to be drawn at the expense of the Corporation and placed in the philosophy chamber by that of his honorable uncle." He took no notice of this compliment. He might have vanity in abundance; but it had been wounded too severely to rise to that lure. He had, moreover, a cash balance in his hands. After much soliciting by another committee, to no purpose, it was voted "to enter suit against the late Treasurer of Harvard College." The authorities hesitated and postponed action, and finally rescinded their vote. The College feared the Legislature, in which Hancock's influence was predominant, and his popularity undiminished. Another appeal was

unnoticed. Then came his election as Governor after these years of solicitation disregarded. In his inaugural address, as has been mentioned, he "warmly commended Harvard College to the care and patronage of the legislature": and the Corporation manifested their gratitude by expressing "their happiness that a gentleman is placed at the head of the General Court and of the Overseers, who has given such substantial evidence of his love of letters and affection to the College, by the generous and repeated benefactions, with which he hath endowed it." Honors were even now; but when as ex-officio Chairman of the Board of Overseers he took his seat he made no answer to their mention that his accounts were still unsettled, nor to the repetition of it once and again. So requests and silences succeeded one another through five terms of governorship, until in his last one, when, giving notice of his intention to resign, he finally made a statement of his accounts, which he had withheld nearly eleven years from the first request by the Corporation in 1774. It then appeared that there was due from him to the College a balance of £1,054. But no payment was made. Two years afterward a letter was sent him saying that "the University could not subsist without receiving its interest money." He replied enigmatically, "It is very well." More letters elicited promises to pay in a week, with repeated postponements and failures to pay. The last

promise was for January, 1793, to be unfulfilled. In October of that year he died, leaving the debt unpaid. Two years later his heirs paid nine years interest on the account, and in the course of six or seven years completed payment of the principal, but refused to pay compound interest, whereby the College lost upwards of five hundred and twenty-six dollars.[1]

The following letter is of interest as showing the efforts to restore friendly relations.

"Boston, Oct'r 20 1783

"Rev. Sir,

"However illiberal the Treatment I have met with from some of the former and present Governors of the College has been it shall never operate in my mind to the Prejudice of the University at Cambridge. I most sincerely wish its Enlargement; the present appearance of those Buildings is very disagreeable for want of a reputable Inclosure, they must appear to a stranger as Buildings totally neglected & Deserted, instead of being improved for the noble purposes they are now Occupied. I wish to Remedy this inconvenience, and have to Request (if worthy your notice) that you would be pleased to give orders to your College Corporation to erect a Respectable Fence around these Buildings, such an one as shall not Disgrace the Buildings, & such an one as shall be pointed out to them by your self & Doctor Cooper, whose Instructions they are to follow, & upon your Signifying the Corporation of the Business, & Transmitting to me the Bill of its amount, it shall meet with immediate Payment.

[1] The author's special acknowledgments are due to the Librarian of Harvard University for access to available originals of this correspondence in the Archives of the University.

"My best wishes for your prosperity & that of the University under your Charge concludes me Rev. Sir,

"Your very hum. Serv't

"JOHN HANCOCK.

"REV. MR. PRESIDENT WILLARD."

To this offer President Willard replied three months later, referring the whole matter of the fence to Governor Hancock, " to direct every thing agreeably to his taste which, I am confident will strike the taste of every judge of architecture."

Two years later President Willard explained at length that he did not intend to treat the Governor with disrespect in assigning him a seat on the occasion of the dinner in honor of Marquis de la Fayette " who was seated below the President on the same bench — the third place — and your Excellency directly opposite — the second place."

Cordial understanding appears to have been restored by 1791 when

"President Willard returns his most respectful compliments to his Excellency the Governor, with his best thanks for his very generous and acceptable present of Madeira and a quarter cask of Sherry wine and two large loaves of sugar. The President wishes it was in his power more fully to express his feelings of gratitude to the Governor for his munificence and kindness." [1]

At a distance of a hundred and nineteen years from its close the whole transaction looks like an instance of financial irregularity through absence, and pressure of more important affairs, with con-

[1] Ms. "Archives of Harvard University."

tinued postponement of an evil day of settlement. That there was premeditated purpose to use the funds of the College, or if used never to repay them, would be the worst interpretation that can be put upon the attitude of Governor Hancock toward his alma mater. After reading President Josiah Quincy's detailed account in his "History of Harvard College" of the long negotiation, of which a brief abstract has been given above, it seems uncharitable to insist that fraud was intended. But Hancock's gross inattention to a trust that had been committed to him, coupled with an uncivil neglect to reply to most courteous requests for information, and finally for relief by transfer of the office to another, is beyond apology and without excuse, although a partial explanation may be found in his undertaking too much business and in the willingness to hold too many offices and a reluctance to surrender any one of accumulated honors. Still, the explanation does not contain the essential elements of an excuse or even an apology.

There is, however, one circumstance in this chapter of Hancock's history that is so unaccountable that it cannot be passed over without mention. The writer of ten letters of detraction over the signature of "Laco," in the year 1789, for some reason failed to take up the most important and damaging charge that he might have used against the re-election of Hancock that year. He accused

him of vanity, caprice, extravagance, social dissipation, pliancy, timidity, lack of statesmanship, favoritism, abuse of prerogative, and other faults which had their value in a campaign document, but not a word about his delinquencies as Treasurer of Harvard. Such silence is almost equivalent to an enemy's praise. So also Governor Hutchinson, who could not be expected to favor Hancock, defended him before the king, who had received impressions of financial irregularity among other evil reports about the arch rebel. And if Samuel Adams had been disposed to make capital out of Hancock's delinquency, as he was not, there was a restraining paragraph in the Town Records reading: "We also find that there still remains to be paid into the Province Treasury on account of Mr. Samuel Adams the Sum of Fifty Pounds, and from the Information given us by Mr. Robert Pierpont it appears that there is no probability that any part of the Sum of £1149, 9, 01 remaining unpaid of Mr. Adams' Debt to the Town will ever be received and paid into the Treasury."[1] Thomas Cushing, Esq., and John Ruddock, Esq., also owed £155 and £82 respectively on account of a lottery authorized by the General Court. Perhaps the quantity of glass in some houses did not encourage stone-throwing at Hancock.

In any case, Harvard misdemeanors do not

[1] "Boston Town Records," 1772, p. 69.

appear to have affected his popularity with the people of Massachusetts, who continued to elect him as their chief magistrate year after year. It is also probable that the College, knowing its dependence upon the General Court, and having a prudent sense of the Governor's influence with that body, kept as quiet about his mismanagement as circumstances would permit. There was a final interchange of compliments when at the installation of President Willard Governor Hancock called the College "in some sense the parent and nurse of the late happy Revolution," and the Corporation termed him "an affectionate and liberal son." To which the historian of this affair adds, that "Hancock's polished manners, wealth, and liberality, and patriotism had rendered him the most popular man in the province." Some, however, have not yet forgiven him after a hundred and nineteen years, and much of existing prejudice against him can be attributed to this unfortunate part of his career.

CHAPTER XIX

LAST YEARS

While Governor Hancock magnified his office and the rights of a State which had been foremost in the Revolution, and sometimes betrayed a lurking fear that the general government might assume undue power, he was not so backward in his support of the federal constitution and government as some of his political associates were. Contending for powers of the States which had not been clearly delegated to Congress, he also kept in mind the authority that had been conceded to the nation. "We shall best support the federal system by maintaining the constitution and government of our own State. The federal government must stand or fall with the State governments. If the federal government absorbs the powers of the State governments, it will become a different system from what it was intended. To maintain it, as it now is, will be best effected by preserving the State governments in all their just authority." Yet it was hard to look beyond his own province, notwithstanding whatever broadening influences he might have met in his terms in Congress. Much that he heard there was of

States' rights, and little of their obligations or concessions. It is not strange therefore that his federal sympathies, though broad for his day, were subordinate to his sense of the prerogatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and by consequence of the other Commonwealths. The nation was to be built upon thirteen separate and distinct pillars. It might hold them together; it must not fuse them into one pillar.

In one respect a new cause of difference and alienation was already beginning to arise and to emphasize the doctrine of States' rights as opposed to national uniformity. It began in Massachusetts when African slavery was abolished at the adoption of its constitution. All the colonies had been encouraged by the home government to pursue the profitable trade in rum for negroes on the Guinea Coast. Royal governors were instructed to negative bills passed by legislatures for the suppression of this trade, in which the nobility and the king himself had a profitable interest. Still, despite court example and control, the colonial conscience was uneasy in the North and frequently in the South, and strong protests were uttered by leading statesmen. The unprofitableness of the system was everywhere notorious, and might have ultimately destroyed it, had not the invention of the cotton gin increased the profits of slave labor marvellously, and in consequence mightily reinforced southern sentiment in favor of perpetuating it. Northern

States one after another followed the example of Massachusetts until, on a question which eventually would broaden into a wide gulf between the two sections, the difference of opinion was already beginning to divide the colonies into two groups, and even communities and families in each.

Hancock did not become blind to the evil of slavery, as some of his successors did through familiarity with its sunny side. He had as keen a sense as some early southern statesmen had of the cancerous germ which the fathers knew they were leaving in the Constitution, hoping that it would disappear with the growth of the nation. Massachusetts did not wait for it to die; but in Hancock's administration and with his recommendation and endorsement continued a reform which, if it had been universally effected, would have saved the nation from the dire calamity of civil war eighty years afterward.[1]

In minor ethics he was equally conscientious, sometimes surpassing his associates. Notwithstanding the relief afforded by the federal govern-

[1] In February, 1788, three negroes were decoyed on board a vessel in Boston harbor and carried to the West Indies, where they were sold into slavery. Subsequently, in consequence of the intervention of Governor Hancock and the French consul at Boston, they were released and brought back to Massachusetts. —6 "Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll." IV, 126. Illuminating material on slaveholding in colonial Boston can be found in "Dealings with the Dead," I, 152, and in Graham's "Hist. U. S." IV, 340.

ment in assuming State debts, the taxes in Massachusetts were high, and with unpaid accumulations from former years to be provided for. Governor Hancock's policy of forbearance in the early eighties had doubtless saved the State from despair if not from anarchy; but when the proposed sale of Maine lands for relief was abandoned as a failure, the Legislature consented to a lottery for the purpose of raising money for the necessities of the State, in a time when even religious societies held left hands behind them for aid through such doubtful expedients. The Governor wisely and firmly disapproved of descending to enlist gambling methods for upholding the credit of the commonwealth, and the Legislature soon came to be convinced of the impolicy of the scheme.

In what was then regarded by many as an equally unbecoming matter he displayed even greater zeal; an inheritance from a Puritan past, which one would hardly look for in the society leader on Beacon Hill. An old law against theatres stood on the statute-book, enacted in imitation of Cromwell's ordinance of 1642, annulled in England fourteen years later. Yet in Massachusetts players appeared on the stage at the risk of arrest. In 1791 sundry respectable citizens of Boston made efforts to get this old statute repealed, urging that it would be easy to select harmless plays for a "literary and elegant entertainment"; but other inhabitants of equally high standing protested. On

one December evening a "Moral Lecture," entitled, "The True-born Irishman," was advertised to follow "Feats on the Tight Rope at the New England Exhibition Room, Board Alley." There was also a commendable attempt to introduce the classic drama into the modern Athens. An unlooked for feature was presented when the Sheriff of Suffolk County unceremoniously stepped forth on the stage in the scene of Bosworth Field in "Richard the Third" and made prisoner the humpback tyrant, threatening also to arrest the entire company unless the performance ceased forthwith. Endicott had come back to Boston. Loud calls to proceed with the play were useless with Richard in the Sheriff's hands. Governor Hancock's portrait had been hung in front of the stage box, possibly as a sop to Cerberus. In a twinkling it fell under the feet of disappointed playgoers, and the handsome visage was disfigured beyond that of the original Richard himself. At the examination of this worthy's representative in Faneuil Hall the attorney-general read a special order for his arrest from Governor Hancock. Harrison Gray Otis defended the King, objecting to the legality of the warrant, issued as it was without complaint being made upon oath. The justices acceded, and the prisoner was discharged. His name was Harper, a proto-martyr to the dramatic art; whose interruption and detention made for the abolition of an unpopular statute on the last day of

1792. A building for stage plays was soon after erected on Federal Street.[1]

Another law, enacted in the Puritan age and rigorously enforced, for the observance of the Lord's Day, was also revived in Hancock's administration. War, as usual, had been followed by a laxity in this respect, and legislation was invoked to restore in a measure former strictness of observance. The new law was not so severe in its penalties as the old, nor in its provisions; as for instance, that there should be no osculatory greetings in families on that day; but it did forbid travelling for business or pleasure, and all recreation.[2] Perhaps the governor in approving this enactment recalled his own arrest one Sunday in a former year for taking a turn on the Common as he

[1] On October 12, 1778, Congress had recommended to the several States "To take the most effectual measures for suppressing theatrical entertainments, horse racing, gaming, and such other diversions as are productive of idleness, dissipation, and a general depravity of principles and manners." — "Journal of Congress," III, 785.

[2] Hancock had diversions becoming his age and position; as when on the 23d of October, 1792, he attended a meeting of the Massachusetts Historical Society to commemorate the completion of the third century after the discovery of America, "when the memory of Columbus was toasted in convivial enjoyment at the dinner table of Hon. James Sullivan, President." — "Mass. Hist. Soc. Proc.," I, 45, note.

On Tuesday, January 22, 1795, sixteen months after her husband's death, it is recorded that "Mrs. Hancock presented the Society with a Fungus and a piece of petrified clay." — *Ib.*, p. 84.

was coming from church. It was too late to bring back the Hebraic code of the preceding century, and prohibition in this instance as in others did not prevent a growing license. Traditional respect was stronger than statutes, and in the main Sunday was well observed for three-quarters of a century, until a greater war entailed greater looseness of observance, to which certain well-known diversions have contributed.

For his own deliberate and unhasting age Hancock had not led a sluggish existence; and his labors and his mode of living together had been sapping a not over-strong constitution before he had rounded out half a century. He had not been without his troubles and sorrows. The infant daughter had died, as has been mentioned, in her first summer, and in 1787 the son in his ninth year met with a fatal accident while skating. Then there was always the customary amount of political criticism, to which Hancock might have been less sensitive than a less generally approved man, provided it were not as blunt as this: "J. H. the first magistrate; who is acquainted with no branch of science at all, not even government, in which he should have been fit for the station he unworthily occupies."[1] And Rev. Dr. William Gordon, pastor of a church to which Hancock had made many gifts, so sharply criticised his bene-

[1] Samuel Dexter to John Temple, in 7 "Mass. Hist. Soc. Proc." VI, 28.

factor that the governor gave up his summer residence in Jamaica Plain.[1]

Since his resumption of the governorship in 1788 his health had declined; still he kept up a brave fight in a critical time for the principles which he deemed vital to the welfare of the commonwealth. His last public efforts were for the defence of its sovereignty, and his final appearance as chief magistrate was before the Legislature in the afternoon of September 18, 1793, in the old State House, whither he was brought, attended by Secretary Avery and Sheriff Allen. On taking his official chair he informed the assembly that his infirm health would not permit him to address them personally, and he begged them to be seated while the Secretary of State read his address, as it would be impossible for him to speak so as to be heard. He had summoned a special session of the General Court to consider a suit at law which had been instituted in the federal court by one Vassal, an alien, against the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Governor and the attorney-general as the principal citizens of the State had received a summons as defendants. The first question to be decided was with regard to the suability of a sovereign State. In his message the Governor had given it as his opinion that the State could not be compelled to answer to a civil

[1] H. M. Whitcomb's "Annals and Reminiscences of Jamaica Plain."

suit, as it would be utterly incompatible with its sovereignty. "He could not conceive, when the Constitution was adopted, that it was expected by the people that a State should be held to answer on compulsory civil process to any individual."

The subject was discussed for several days, when a vote was passed, one hundred and seven to nineteen, supporting the opinion of the Governor, in these words: "Resolved, That a power claimed of compelling a State to become a defendant in a court of the United States, at the suit of an individual or individuals, is unnecessary and inexpedient; and in its exercise dangerous to the peace, safety, and independence of the several states, and repugnant to the first principles of a federal government." The State delegates in Congress were instructed to obtain an amendment to the Constitution embodying the sense of the above resolution. In consequence, an article was soon added denying the authority of the United States Court to oblige a State to answer before it to the civil suit of citizens of another State. It was a bold measure, but in accord with the sentiments of a people who had not fully adopted the idea of a national or consolidated government. The entire action bordered on a refusal to obey its authority when as yet an appeal to the States for their concurrence had not been made. State sovereignty was still in the governor's mind, and his last fight was for its maintenance; in which he achieved a greater success

for Massachusetts and all the States than he lived to see.

When the Secretary had finished reading the address to the Legislature the Governor added: "I rely upon your candor to pardon this mode of addressing you. I feel the seeds of mortality growing fast within me. But I think I have, in this case, done no more than my duty, as a servant of the people. I never did and I never will deceive them while I have life and strength to act in their service."

The assembly arose as the Governor was conveyed to his carriage and taken home, never again to appear in public. He died three weeks later of gout and exhaustion, October 8, 1793, in the fifty-seventh year of his age.

For a week citizens from all parts of the State came by thousands to pay tributes of respect to his memory. On the 16th a procession a mile and a half long followed the body to the Granary Burying-ground. A funeral escort under command of Brigadier-General Hull consisted of Officers of the Militia, Justices of the Peace, Judges of Probate, the Attorney-General, Justices of the Supreme Court, members of the Legislature and Council, and the Lieutenant-governor. Six of the oldest Councillors were the pall-bearers. After these followed relatives, the Vice-President of the United States, and members of Congress; Judges and Secretaries, former Councillors and Senators of Massachusetts; the President, Corporation, and

Professors of Harvard College; Selectmen and Town Clerk of Boston, with other town officers; Clergymen, members of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company, a Committee of the Brattle Street Church, of which the deceased had been a member. Citizens and visitors completed the procession, which moved from "the Mansion House of the late Governor, across the Common and down Frog Lane [now Boylston Street] to Liberty Pole, through the Main Street, and round the State House, up Court Street — and from thence to the place of interment."

A conspicuous person in this procession was Samuel Adams, who was obliged to withdraw from it at State Street on account of failing strength. When the General Court assembled in the following January he opened his address as Lieutenant-governor with these words: —

> "It having pleased the Supreme Being, since your last meeting, in his holy Providence to remove from this transitory life our late excellent Governor Hancock, the multitude of his surviving fellow-citizens, who have often given strong testimonials of their approbation of his important services, while they drop a tear, may certainly profit by the recollection of his virtuous and patriotic example."

With this moderate eulogy he proceeded to the affairs before the Legislature.

The Rev. Dr. Thacher, Hancock's pastor, preached a sermon with fuller appreciation on the 29th of October in the Brattle Street Church, three

weeks after the Governor's death. It has peculiar value as testimony to the character of the subject, coming as it did from an intimate associate in the affairs of the parish and the town and based upon general opinion as well as his own. After the custom of the time, and as in his memorial discourses in the instances of Governors Bowdoin and Samuel Adams, the sermon is so long as to forbid entire quotation. Disconnected sentences must stand for the sentiments of the whole.

"It is difficult to draw the character of a man in a station so elevated without being charged with partiality, and with a disposition to flatter the dead, or gratify the living. But think not that I shall attempt to describe this great man as a character absolutely perfect, for perfection is not the lot of humanity, and to ascribe it to the best of men must prove a want of sincerity or knowledge. Let his failings, for which charity will furnish many apologies, be buried with him.

"Governor Hancock was formed by nature to act a brilliant part in the world. His abilities were of the kind which strike, astonish and please. They were highly respectable, and were cultivated by education, travel, and the conversation of safe and good men. Coming into possession of a fortune superior to any which our part of America had then known, his friends viewed him with anxiety; they feared that he would be drawn into the vortex of dissipation. They were pleased when they found him taking a different turn, wishing to acquire the esteem and confidence of men of character, and appearing as the friend and asserter of the liberties of his country. His patriotism and his amiable popular manners rendered him the idol of his fellow citizens; they loved his very

name and early showered upon him their best honors. No man before him ever possessed such a command of their affections. They loved him because he espoused their cause and aimed at their interest. His name and influence were of the highest importance to the common cause.

"He was eloquent and spoke with ease and propriety; his manners were graceful, and he had a peculiar talent of presiding with dignity at the head of a deliberative body: every individual supposed himself to be particularly noticed and favored. When at his own request he was released from the fatigues of Congress he was received with former affection and experienced former confidence by the people of Massachussetts when they called him to be the first Governor under our present constitution. Such distinction is seldom placed in the same man, but Mr. Hancock never lost the popular affection. He was also a firm friend to the independence and happiness of united America. He gave his decided influence in favor of the federal constitution, and did then perhaps as much service to his country as when he consented to its independence.

"To this may be added his munificence. Perhaps there is not a person in America who has done more generous and noble actions or contributed more liberally to public institutions. His acts of charity of a more private nature were numerous and constant. The poor, the widow, the fatherless, the unhappy debtor, the prisoner, the decayed gentleman, all experienced his bounty. The sums which he gave away would scarcely be credited.

"His reverence for religion was never lost. He was interested in every thing that related to the house of God. He exceeded his worthy ancestors in his liberality to this society and proved his real attachment to our peace and happiness. It might have been said of him as of the centurion by the Jews, 'He loved our nation and hath built us a synagogue.'"

It is on record that the expenses of the governor's funeral were not paid by the State but from the estate of the chief magistrate himself, who, unlike the Commonwealth, was not burdened with debts, although his fortune had been greatly impaired by the stringency of the time.[1]

One hundred years after his death the Legislature of Massachusetts on February 3, 1894, coming to a sense of the obscurity in which John Hancock had lain for a century, passed this resolution: —

"*Resolved*, that there be allowed and paid out of the treasury of the Commonwealth a sum not exceeding three thousand dollars, to be expended under the direction of the Governor and Council, for the purpose of erecting a suitable memorial over the grave of Gov. John Hancock in the Granary Burying-ground in Boston."

When the monument was placed a service of dedication was held on September 10, 1896: the shaft being unveiled by a great-grand-niece, Miss

[1] "Shabby Commonwealth!! thus early in your career you exemplified the old saying, that the State can do no wrong, and that the dead have no rights that the living are bound to respect. You took advantage of Madam's lack of business experience and training, and defrauded her of the funeral expenses, amounting to eighteen hundred dollars, in a manner that, however pleasing to King George the Third, he would not have been guilty of, and your example would have made even Becky Sharp turn green with envy." — Joseph Henry Curtis's "Life of Campestris Ulm," p. 37. A charge of vandalism was brought against Massachusetts for the destruction of the Hancock mansion in 1863 after a failure to purchase it in 1859, or to accept it later when offered to Boston as a gift. See the "Bulletin of the Society for the Preservation of N. E. Antiquities," May, 1910.

Mary Elizabeth Wood, as there was no direct descendant of John Hancock. On account of the rain that afternoon the service was continued in the Park Street Church, at which Governor Wolcott said: —

"It has long been a matter of comment, and possibly of regret to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, that the grave of her first governor, a man who played so large a part in the Revolutionary period, remained in the heart of the principal city of the Commonwealth unmarked by any enduring monument.[1]

"It will be one of those spots to which the feet of pilgrims will be directed. It will be one of the memories which those who visit us from other States or other countries will bear away with them from historic Boston and historic Massachusetts, and as the hurrying crowd passes by the sidewalk, I hope that it will speak eloquently for all years to come of patriotic and loyal service to the Commonwealth."

In his speech accepting the monument in behalf of the State he said: —

"As we look back upon that period of the revolution, to the events that led up to it, there is one figure, among others, that stands with peculiar significance to the public mind. That figure is John Hancock. A man of dignity of presence, fond of elaborate ceremonial, elegant in his attire, courtly in his manner, a man of education and great wealth for that time, and a man who threw himself heart and soul into the patriotic duties of the hour. I think we especially connect his name and memory with three acts. In the first place, we remember that in the proclamation of amnesty there were two names excepted; one was that of John Hancock, the other that of Samuel Adams. We

[1] "No. 16, Tomb of Hancock," was all that marked the patriot's resting place for a century.

remember that when Paul Revere rode out into Middlesex County to warn the farmers of the approach of British troops, John Hancock and Samuel Adams were slumbering quietly in the little village of Lexington, and that their capture was accounted as important to the British cause as the capture or destruction of the ammunition which they were sent out to seize.

"We especially remember John Hancock again as president of the Continental Congress, and as the first to sign, in his bold, fine signature, his name to that immortal declaration, in which those who signed it pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor to the cause of liberty."

Of Mrs. Hancock it remains to be said that on July 28, 1796, she married Captain James Scott, who was a trusted ship-master long in the employ of her first husband. She outlived the second many years, residing for a time at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and afterward at No. 4 Federal Street, Boston, where her hospitality was enlivened by her remarkable memory and brilliant conversation. When Lafayette was in the country in 1825 they recalled together the scenes of fifty years before, when in younger days they could not foresee the fulfilment of their hopes. She could recollect the personal appearance and manners of British officers quartered in Boston, of whom Earl Percy seems to have made the most favorable impression, since, accustomed to the luxuries of Warkworth Castle, his Northumberland home, he slept among his troops in a tent on the Common during the winter of 1774–5,

and drilled the regulars at dawn not far from the Hancock mansion.[1] He did not advance far enough toward Lexington on the next 19th of April, when he covered the disastrous retreat, for Dorothy Quincy to catch one more glimpse of him before she was withdrawn from all further visual admiration of the fascinating Earl to Connecticut Fairfield and the equally attractive Aaron Burr. It is not strange that Hancock had his hours of solicitude in his lodgings at Philadelphia until the August wedding-day. On her part it seems to have been an instance of love after marriage. When in old age she was complimented on her good looks, she would laughingly reply, "What you say is more than half a hundred years old. My ears remember it; but what were dimples once are wrinkles now." To the end however, she was as attentive to her attire as in early years, and had no patience with a young girl who did not dress to please, nor with one who was vain of her clothes. Madam Scott died in Boston on February 3, 1830, in her eighty-fourth year.[2]

[1] It has been said that Mrs. Hancock extended courtesies to the officers' ladies of Burgoyne's army at Cambridge after its defeat, and that these attentions were gratefully received and long remembered. — Loring's "Hundred Orators," p. 107.

For social amenities at the Hancock mansion see the "Transactions of the Colonial Society of Mass.," VI, 317.

[2] Reminiscences of her life with her first husband, John Hancock, were given in 1822 to General William H. Sumner and were published by him in the New England Historical and Genealogical Register for April, 1854, vol. VIII, 187.

CHAPTER XX

AN ESTIMATE

In asking what place John Hancock occupied in his day, and what values he represents in American history, two factors must be considered which determine the character, conduct, and achievement of men of distinction who are not geniuses, and therefore to be accounted for by their heredity and environment.

Whatever value is attached to the doctrine of heredity, it will be allowed that inheritances of disposition from progenitors are a large part of the capital with which a child starts in life. In this instance a reputed descent from remote ancestors in Ireland has been claimed, and the possible persistence of sundry Celtic traits is illustrated by well-known characteristics. These, however, had lived on amidst the chilly influences of the Puritan age until they were stiffened into habits and principles unlike their original form and spirit. A love of leadership, for instance, had hardened into a grandfather's dominating temper, to be softened in the grandson into a harmless desire to be foremost in the procession, with the

notoriety which that kind of precedence bestows. Sometimes the professional accretion of an overlord spirit from the period of a magisterial ministry cropped out when circumstances favored, but there was no desperate fight to win and keep preëminence, such as Samuel Adams maintained until his main purpose was accomplished. Still, Hancock had no faculty of keeping in the background, such as the retiring but able Hawley had; a man who would have outrun all radicals if a native modesty and a singular disposition had not marred his efficiency. No self-depreciation restrained Hancock when his services or presence were needed. If modesty is a fault, as some hold, he was blameless in that respect. If generous appreciation of one's self is a helpful quality in the daily struggle, he found this gift a sustaining power in a time when every ally was needed. Confidence in himself gave him good hope for the cause which had him for one of its foremost champions. Because he himself had espoused it, there was no question in his mind of its worthiness. The right would prevail eventually, and no later on account of his own attitude towards it. Such consciousness affords great comfort to its possessor, and moreover radiates abundant cheer in a time when uncertainty and doubt, misgiving and fear prevail. Courage, determination, and zeal accomplish wonders; but an added assurance and a confident front are often the stay of those who

look to their leaders to do their thinking, and to their watchmen to tell them of the night and of the morning. If half the victory is in believing that it can be won, there is always some one to win the other half.

But Hancock was not all conceit. It is the habit of his detractors to put uppermost this amusing, but harmless and sometimes useful, defect, thus overclouding his sterling qualities. Because he was vain, he could therefore be nothing else, is poor logic. As well say, because he was handsome he had no courage, generosity, and sympathy: or because he loved official station therefore he was not an admirable occupant of it. Let his well-known kindness to the poor and his benevolence to the public refute the first supposition, and repeated re-elections deny the second. Instead, his generous gifts overbalanced whatever publicity they unavoidably gained in a time when the left hand could not fail to know what the right hand did, especially when both were extended in benefaction. To the hundred thousand dollars which it is estimated he contributed or sacrificed to the cause of liberty, might be added an unstinted hospitality toward all classes in several ways, often in the name and to the honor of the town of which he was a citizen. To the churches he was equally well disposed, as in the gift of a thousand pounds sterling to the building of the Brattle Street Church, of which he was a member, with the addition of

pulpit furniture and a bell; also of similar gifts at Jamaica Plain, his summer resort. To the poor he gave freely, especially in a time of distress when want was at every door where there was not a competence within.

His patriotism is so often assumed to be a matter of course, and as something which should belong to all Americans, that it is not always remembered what an unusual and exceptional occurrence it was for a prominent citizen of Boston to join the movement against the established government in the beginning of the revolt. Its early promoters from the docks, shops, and shipyards, who had not much to lose, did not attract many substantial merchants, salaried judges, and government officials who were content to let well-enough alone, and who considered the outcome as exceedingly uncertain long after the war broke out. Nor does it so much matter by what persuasions Hancock was induced to throw himself into the movement at first as that he did it in the face of considerations which kept most of his circle out of it at the time. If no aristocrat had joined the laboring classes whose majorities Samuel Adams was swelling by speeches, newspaper articles, and oftener by personal talk, the cause would have received tardier support. The surprise of great houses on the hillsides and of their heads at the Royal Exchange must have been genuine when the richest man of them all broke away from the ingrained and inherited loy-

alty of a hundred and fifty years to join the discontented rabble, always ready for any change, and easily led by the man who dares, having only his voice to contribute to the cause. Hancock and his neighbors had warehouses and foreign trade, respectability and social standing, with the stability and prosperity of the existing order, and the conservatism natural to the English race, with its divine right of grumbling at present evils and its dogged pertinacity in keeping them sacred up to the point of explosion. The best in Boston did not admit that they had reached that point even after Gage invested the town. Those who have a century and a third of independence behind them cannot easily understand such devotion to British authority in all matters; but they who had a century and a half of home government back of them, and a thousand years of its traditions beyond that, could not comprehend that the untried new would be better than the old with all the faults they had condoned or been half proud of. The new king was arbitrary without doubt, but his best men were not; and they were slowly warping the Hanoverian hulk into the current again. If British generals and admirals would show pluck enough to suppress rope-spinners, ship carpenters, and shopmen, and have wit enough to catch Sam Adams, and get Hancock made a peer of the realm, time and mortality would adjust all temporary ills, and prosperity would return with ships from

every port. So reasoned the aristocrats of Boston.

Hancock's defection from the coterie of merchant princes and their policy was unaccountable to them. What could radical rebels promise him besides the companionship that misery loves? This was the talk of the majority in the lordly mansions which looked out on the harbor from the garden slopes that faced it. Hancock himself had been familiar with loyal sentiments in his uncle's house. Was he so distressed by imposts and navigation acts beyond all others that he would better his trade by rebellion; for it was to secure commercial justice rather than freedom which started the revolution.

It is commonly said that Sam Adams held up before him such likelihood of preferment in the new order that Hancock was induced to risk everything for its rewards. This supposition became more plausible after these emoluments had been bestowed upon him than it was in the year when Adams is said to have pictured an attractive future for a man whose prominence would lend assistance to the cause. If Hancock had political ambitions Governor Hutchinson could have pointed out a shorter road to distinction, and a much surer and safer one. What had Adams to promise in 1775 beyond the chairmanship of a radical club, and later of a disputing legislature, and a discordant Congress? These honors were the best the coun-

try could bestow, to be sure, after the command of its troops; but John Hancock was too wise a tradesman to sell his commercial interests, his fortune, and his favor at court for these uncertain compensations alone.

Suppose that his course be matched to another theory: that having seen the condition of the middle and lower classes in England under a limited monarchy, and being sensible of the contrast between the freedom of American colonists and the subjection of home-born Britons, he should resent encroachments upon long-enjoyed privileges, fearing their diminution and any approach to the conditions in which the English commonalty passed its stolid existence. Moreover, he might equally deplore an arbitrary assertion of the right to lay burdens upon colonials which had not been imposed hitherto, and to depreciate the compensatory privilege of indirect representation in the legislative body, unlike that direct method to which the colonies had been accustomed. There were also under the general charge of unfairness and despotic treatment specific allegations, such as were afterward incorporated in the Preamble to the Declaration of Independence. In an historical novel[1] relating to the revolutionary period, the writer has placed the statement of these grievances to the credit of Hancock rather than of Adams or any other precursor of Jefferson. A little of the con-

[1] "Cardigan" by Robert W. Chambers. N. Y., 1902, p. 384.

text may help illumine a feature of political club doings in Boston town in uneasy times. The title hero, "Cardigan," is present at the "Wild Goose Club" of minute-men captains when: —

"A fashionably dressed young man approached our table. His style of dress was not to my taste — an apple-green coat, white silk stockings, silver buckles, and much expensive lace at his throat and cuffs. . . . Everybody had now taken chairs and formed a semi-circle around Mr. Hancock, who leaned against the great centre table and said: —

"'I am here to submit to you a list of crimes against our colony of Massachusetts Bay, committed or contemplated by the King of England. He refuses his assent to laws and measures for the public good; forbids the passage of laws unless suspended in their operation till his assent be obtained; calls together legislative bodies at unusual places to discourage attendance; dissolves assemblies for opposing his invasion of people's rights and obstructs the administration of justice; makes judges dependent upon his will alone for tenure of office and salaries; creates new offices to be filled by his appointments; keeps a standing army here in time of peace independent of civil power; protects its troops from punishment for murder; cuts off our trade with the whole world; taxes us without our consent; deprives us of trial by jury; transports us for trial; takes away our charters, abolishes our laws, and suspends our legislatures.'

"Hancock looked up, holding the paper unrolled. 'Why,' he said lightly, 'this is no king, but Cæsar among his pretorians.' . . . Then with brief inclination he turned and left the room.

"It was not an orator's effort that Hancock had accomplished; it was a mere statement of the truth; yet so skilfully timed and so dramatic in execution that it was worth

months of oratory before the vast audiences of Faneuil Hall."

The author of this imaginary scene warns readers in his preface against taking the novel for history; yet like good fiction of the kind it is as valuable for illustration as some histories that have been written. His portrait of Hancock is as characteristic as some that have been made of him in colors. The charges against the king, which the author puts into the patriot's mouth, such as Jefferson afterward penned, were commonplaces of daily utterance, and were more likely to be spoken by Hancock and Adams than any other leading citizens of Boston, Otis perhaps excepted. They were allegations which ought to have moved all the aristocrats of the town to follow the chief of them in revolt against the stubborn tyranny of George the Third.

To this portraiture by the novelist the following personal note by a contemporary may be added: —

"He will be considered in the history of our country as one of the greatest men of his age. How true this may be, distant generations are not likely to know. He was sent as a delegate to Congress in 1774; and in consequence of his personal deportment, and his fame as a patriot, he was elevated, in an assembly of eminent men, to the dignity of President, which office he held when the Declaration was signed, at which time he was only thirty-nine years of age.

"In June, 1782, Hancock had the appearance of advanced age, though only forty-five. He had been repeatedly and severely afflicted with the gout, a disease much more common

in those days than it now is, while dyspepsia, if it existed at all, was not known by that name. As recollected, at this time, Mr. Hancock was nearly six feet in stature, and of slender person, stooping a little, and apparently enfeebled by disease. His manners were very gracious, of the old style of dignified complaisance. His face had been very handsome. Dress was adapted quite as much to be ornamental as useful. Gentlemen wore wigs when abroad, and, commonly, caps when at home. At this time (June, 1782) about noon, Hancock was dressed in a red velvet cap, within which was one of fine linen. The latter was turned up over the lower edge of the velvet one, two or three inches. He wore a blue damask gown, lined with silk; a white stock, a white satin embroidered waistcoat, black satin small clothes, white silk stockings, and red morocco slippers. It was a general practice in genteel families to have a tankard of punch made in the morning, and placed in a cooler when the season required it. Visitors were invited to partake of it. At this visit, Hancock took from the cooler, standing on the hearth, a full tankard, and drank first himself, and then offered it to those present. Hancock was hospitable. There might have been seen at his table all classes, from grave and dignified clergymen, down to the gifted in song, narration, anecdote and wit, with whom 'noiseless falls the foot of Time, that only treads on flowers.'

"Though Hancock was very wealthy, he was too much occupied with public affairs to be advantageously attentive to his private. The times in which he lived, and the distinguished agency which fell to his lot, from his sincere and ardent devotion to the patriot cause, engendered a strong self regard. He was said to be somewhat sensitive, easily offended, and very uneasy in the absence of the high consideration which he claimed, rather as a right than a courtesy. He had strong personal friends, and equally strong personal enemies. From such causes arose some irritating difficulties.

He had not only a commanding deportment, which he could qualify with a most attractive amenity, but a fine voice, and a highly graceful manner. These were traits which distinguished him from most men, and qualified him to preside in popular assemblies with great dignity. He was not supposed to be a man of great intellectual force by nature; and his early engagements in political life, and as the scenes in which he was conversant called for the exercise of his powers only in the public service, he was so placed as not to have had occasion to display the force of his mind, in that service, so as to enable those of the present day to judge of it, excepting in his communications, as Governor of Massachusetts, to the Legislature.

"If history has any proper concern with the individual qualities of Hancock, it may be doubtful whether, in these respects, distant generations will know exactly what manner of man he was. But, as a public man, his country is greatly indebted to him. He was most faithfully devoted to her cause, and it is a high eulogy on his patriotism, that when the British Government offered pardon to all the rebels, for all their offenses, Hancock and Samuel Adams were the only persons to whom this grace was denied." [1]

Suppose that Hancock had been one of the small shopkeepers on the side streets of the town, perhaps as unsuccessful in business as Samuel Adams was, but had felt the injustice of British rule, as some Britons saw it; and that he had joined in the early remonstrances against it, no charge of what he was likely to gain would have been urged to account for his patriotism. It is possible that

[1] Sullivan's "Familiar Letters on Public Characters," — Hancock. See also Graydon's "Memoirs of His Own Times," Appendix D, p. 425.

he could discern the evils of the time as clearly as the wayside tradesman who had little to lose, and that his regard for the general profit under a popular government would be as great as a grocer's or a cobbler's. His large business and great wealth naturally stood in the way of revolutionary ideas, with their inevitable disturbance of trade and finance and the worse conditions which might follow colonial failure in a doubtful contest. It is, therefore, to his greater credit that, despite naturally opposing considerations, he was willing to risk everything for the possibility of the country's freedom to work out its own prosperity amidst its abundant resources. It would be easier for a biographer to place Hancock where he deservedly belongs if he could say that he was not rich or ostentatious or vain. On the other hand, if these qualifications to perfection made it hard for his class to enter into the new kingdom, additional esteem should be awarded a man who could ally himself with a doubtful but noble cause which promised more for future generations than his own.

If the possibility of patriotism existing together with wealth and social position be looked for, and in spite of the probable loss of such advantages, abundant examples can be found in the history of the nation. In Boston, one instance in particular will occur to those who recall what Wendell Phillips sacrificed to the "little band of nobodies" at the outset of the crusade against an evil which

early statesmen deplored, but failed to extirpate from the Constitution and the Nation.[1] From time to time there will be men whose sense of wrong and vision of right will be greater than of the chance surroundings of wealth or the uncertain prospect of ambitions as doubtful as were those of any conspicuous patriot before the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown. Comparatively great as were the rewards which were thrust upon the man who of all revolutionists had the most to lose, the compensation did not equal what he risked, unless what he valued most be counted — the vision of a free republic under a constitutional government, which he was permitted to behold before his death.

While, therefore, we may smile with his contemporaries at his harmless love of display and of official position, we may remember also that there was a generous side in his almost indiscriminate hospitality, and in his sacrifice of time and money for the public weal. If he was vain, it will be admitted that vanity is a common weakness with different location in one and another, visible and invisible; and, moreover, that there were many provocatives to self-complacency, and numerous sycophants to feed and encourage it. If he was not a great statesman he at least had the tact and patience to manage a discordant assembly, and to keep them free from initial disunion, and therefore from eventual relapse into a worse subjection

[1] The front doors of the houses occupied by Hancock and by Phillips now stand side by side in the old State House.

than at first, and to bring them on a part of the way toward the beginnings of confederacy, itself to end in union. If John Hancock had not lived, and had not been the man for a trying position in a critical time; if he had not given to a democratic enterprise the aristocratic following of himself and a few friends who were influenced by his example, thus furnishing a tone at which democracy pretends to scoff, but inwardly is glad to have as an ally, as well as the funds that usually accompany respectability; if these adventitious elements had not been at the service of a reactionary cause in the rebellious town of Boston first, and throughout the land afterward, success might possibly have followed in time and through other men. But at that day it seemed, and even now seems, that another fate awaited disagreeing, half-hearted patriots; such as might have befallen them if there had been no Robert Morris behind the treasury and no George Washington at the head of the army. Therefore as the shrewd financier had a talent for the business side of war, and as the other had a genius for military science beneath all the imperfections that hypercritical historians have discovered, so let it be admitted that underneath the purple and fine linen, and despite his chariot and six, John Hancock had a true-hearted devotion to liberty, inspiring a diligent, wise, and sincere service of his country for its needful union, eventual independence, and ultimate prosperity.

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